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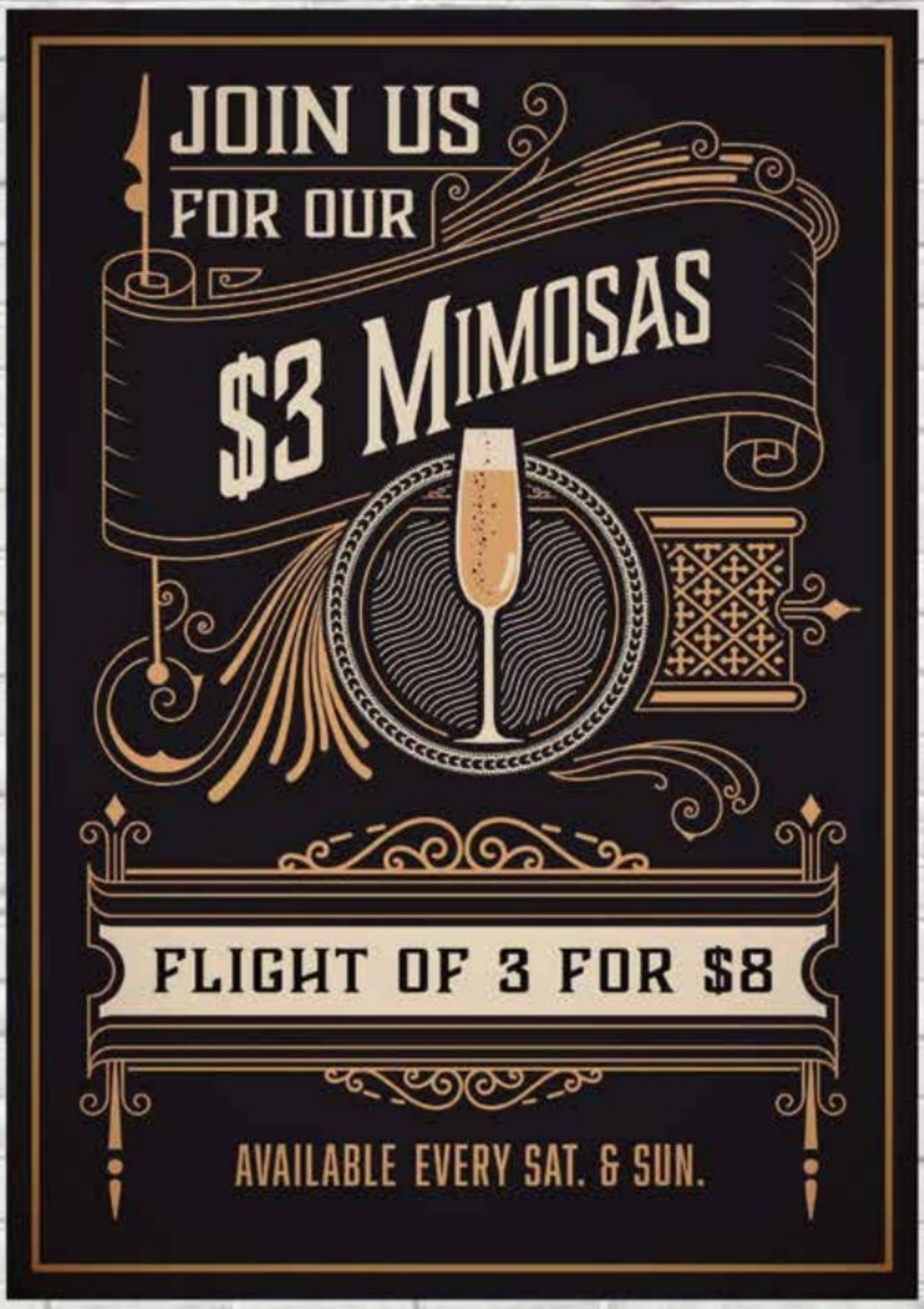

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2400 Ocean Point Place • Landfall • $1,089,000

The location says it all! Stunning all brick home at the end of a quiet cul-de-sac overlooking the tranquil tidal marsh of Howe Creek and Landfall's Jack Nicklaus designed ocean golf course (#5). The open floor plan features 10' ceilings 8' doors with a great room vaulted ceiling of 20'. A first floor master is complimented with a luxurious bath and walk-in closet

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1409 Futch Creek Road • Porters Neck • $749,000

Overlooking the soft, tranquil tidal waters of Futch Creek with a private pier, this custom-built all brick home has been thoughtfully designed to take advantage of the pie shaped lot to maximize views and privacy. The kitchen includes granite counters, double ovens, Wolfe glass cook top and Meihle dishwasher overlooks a vaulted ceiling great room and stunning sun room both offering access to the large waterfront deck.

8055 Masonboro Loop Road • Masonboro Loop • $2,995,000

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2041 Montrose Lane • Landfall • $1,675,000

Located on two lots comprising 1.4 acres overlooking Landfall's Jack Nicklaus designed marsh course with views of Howe Creek, this immaculate 5400 square feet features 4 bedrooms, 5 1/2 baths and includes a first floor master with elegant, updated bath and his/her walk-in closets. Mahogany paneled study, two story coffered living room, 3 car garage, heated salt-water pool, cabana and outdoor fireplace.

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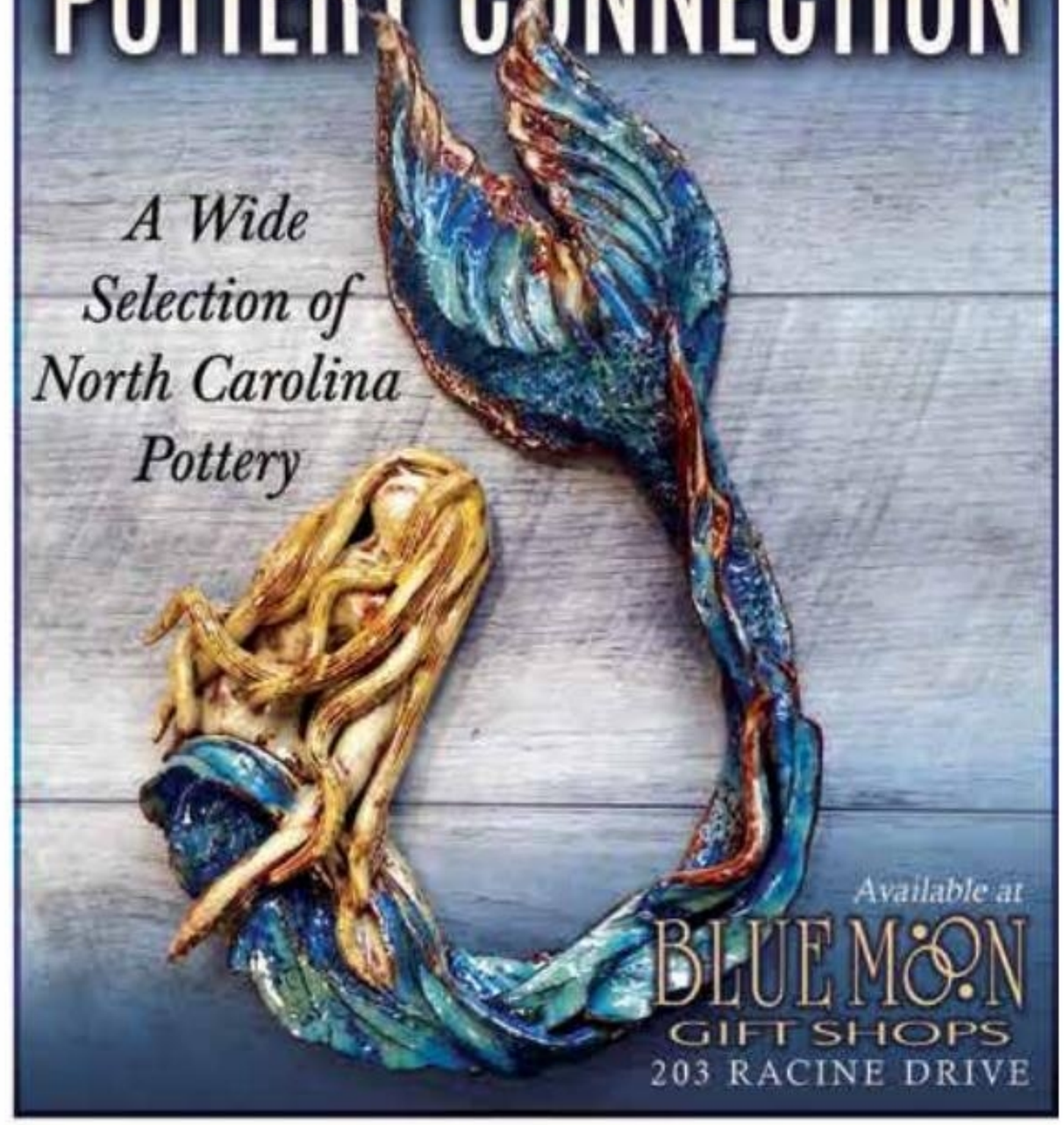

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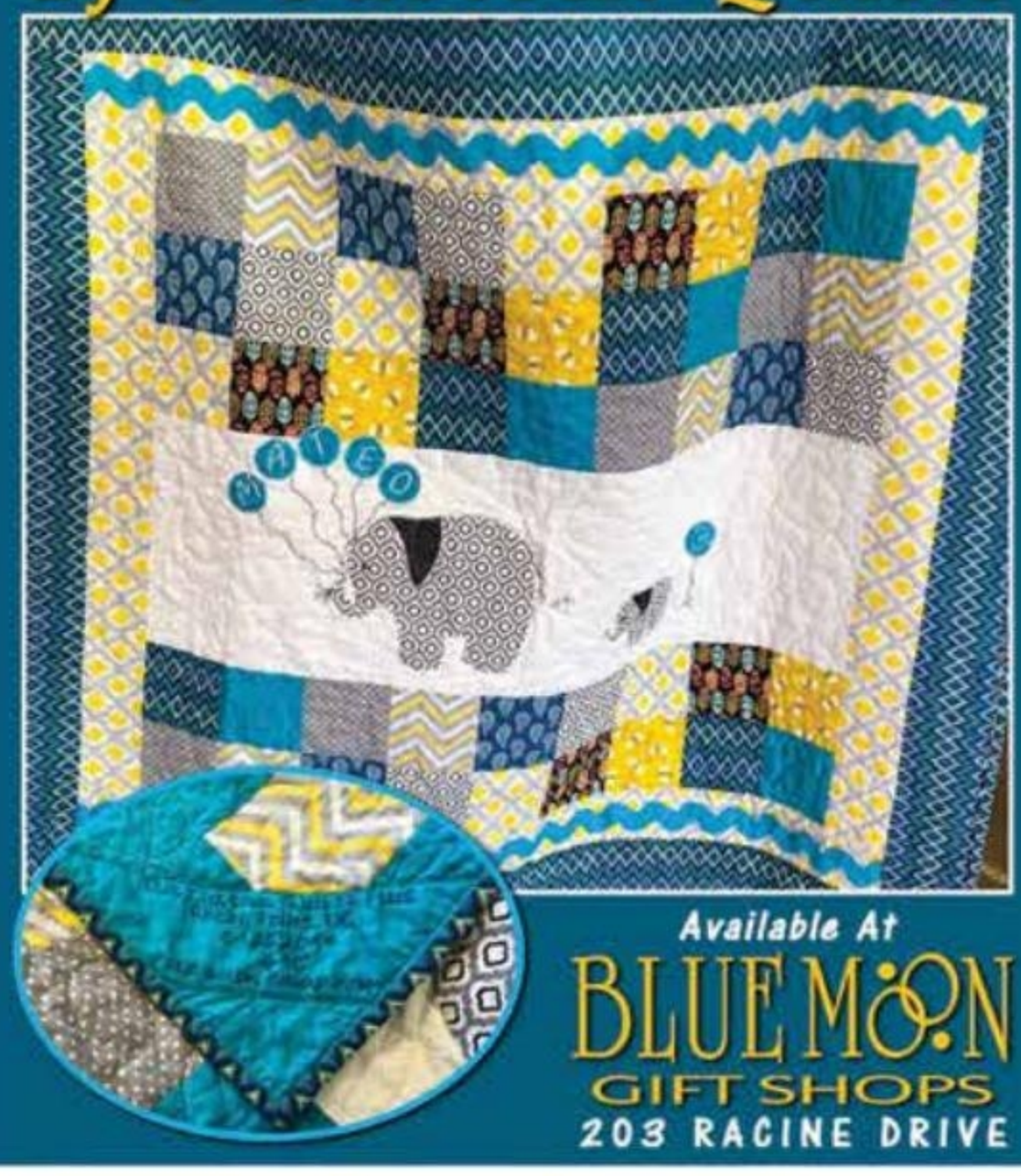

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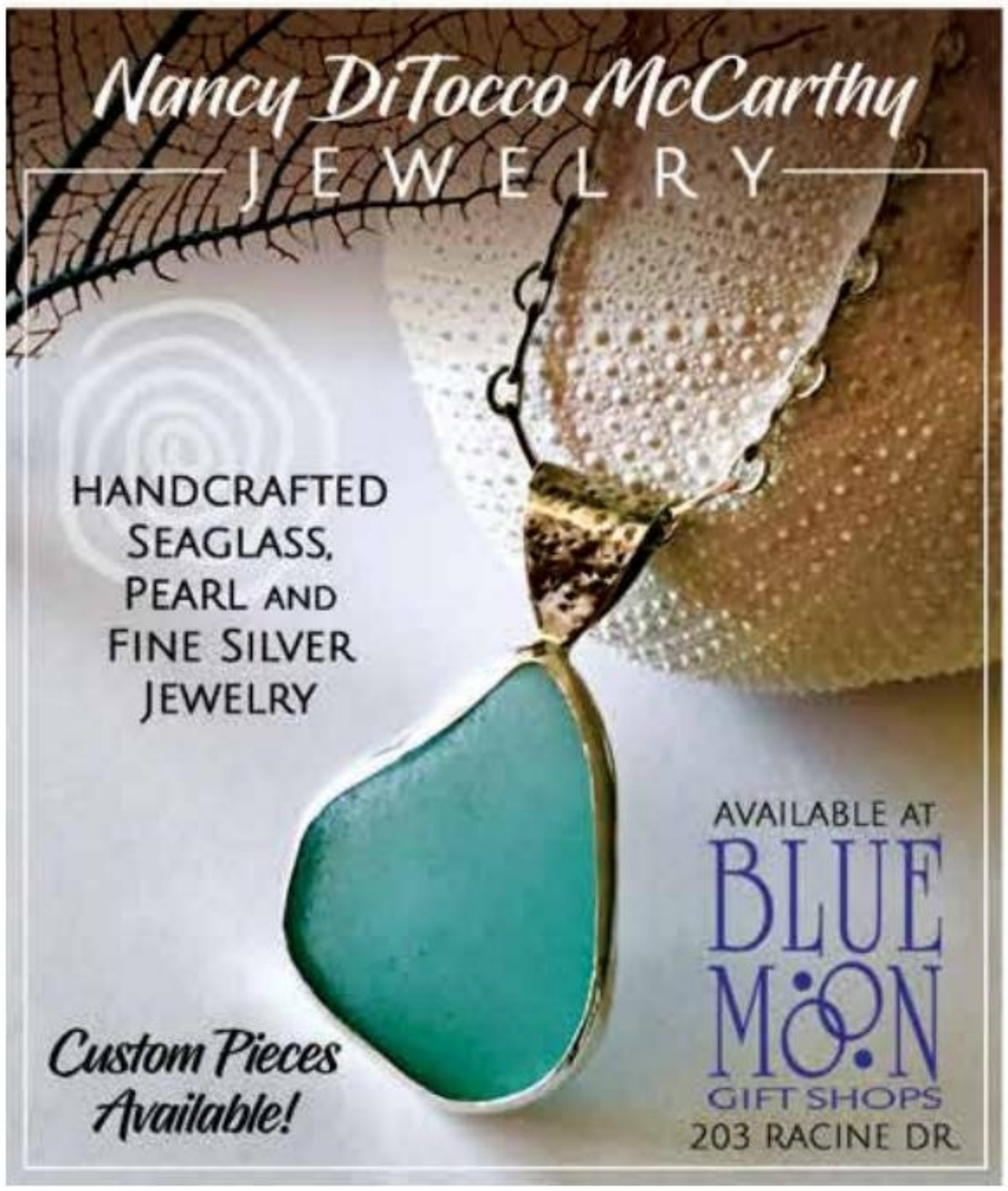
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Life and Limb

My cabins in the sky

By Jim Dodson

One of my secret pleasures is a mind-candy house program on Animal Planet called *Treehouse Masters*, in which an infectiously enthusiastic house designer and self-described "tree whisperer" named Pete Nelson and his merry band of workers create mind-boggling treehouse retreats for clients. His stated mission is to help customers get back to nature and in touch with their inner kid.

It's a pure fantasy show that combines three of my favorite things — houses, trees and memories of climbing them during my childhood. It was probably inevitable for a kid who grew up on a diet of adventure books, and camping and hiking forests all over the western portions of this state and neighboring Virginia, that I would eventually get around to building a treehouse, especially after I saw Disney's 1960 version of *Swiss Family Robinson*. The shipwrecked but enterprising Robinson clan lashed together a furnished treehouse palace that featured running water from a turning wheel, thatch-roofed bedrooms, a full-service kitchen and salvaged ship's wheel that raised the ladder each evening to protect against wild animals or unwelcome visitors. They lived with a pair of large friendly dogs and a parrot, and even had a piano that somehow survived the shipwreck.

In my opinion, those lucky Robinsons had the perfect life.

Of course, I was only 7, a kid who'd had a happy but fairly solitary life building forts in the woods and reading adventure books, the son of a Southern newspaperman who hauled his young family across the Deep South to his various posts before coming permanently home to Greensboro in 1959 — shortly before the shipwrecked Robinsons showed up in Cinemascope on the big screen.

My first treehouse was a distinctly modest platform affair — more lookout stand that actual shelter. Perched in a patch of hardwoods in a public park across the street from the apartment we rented while our first house was being built in a rural subdivision, it was probably illegal. But so were the Robinsons. You reached the platform by inching up a thick-knotted rope. The platform was probably only 10 feet off the ground but it felt amazingly close to heaven in the trees, the ideal place for me to sit and read and keep an eye out for wild animals or unwanted visitors.

At the rear of our new property, my father knocked together an impressive one-room treehouse he furnished with a second-hand dining room table, four mismatched chairs and an old rickety bookcase. I spent a year furnishing that rustic pied-à-terre in the sky with my favorite childhood books and "interesting" stuff I found all over creation until

one regrettable summer afternoon I found three girls from the neighborhood having an unauthorized tea party with their dolls in my cherished aerie. Without thinking of the consequences, I fetched a garden hose to cool off the party and quickly felt the wrath of several outraged mothers, hastening the demise of my beloved place on high.

That's why, when I stumbled across *Treehouse Masters*, my inner child was set loose from detention.

The New Age treehouses Pete Nelson and his crew create are elaborate affairs that make the industrious Robinsons look like rank beginners. They typically include all the creature comforts of the modern Earth-bound home and then some: fancy woodstoves and electric lights; flush toilets and outdoor showers; kitted-out gourmet kitchens and decks with breathtaking views from high in the trees, rivaling anything you would find in a swanky vacation home.

My favorite segment of the show, however, is when the host calls on fellow treehouse nuts who have created their own unique handcrafted cabins in the sky, retreats that display incredible craftsmanship, artistry and ecological harmony.

One I particularly enjoyed involved a bearded chap who built himself a gorgeous treehouse that was more like a storybook chapel over a stony brook in the Connecticut woods. It was essentially a meditation and reading room with large windows, a simple desk, woodstove, small functioning kitchen and a room where he could sit for hours watching nature through the seasons, forgetting the rest of the world.

His was a slightly more elaborate version of the treehouse I fully intended to someday create above a vernal pool in the forest behind the post-and-beam house I helped build with my own hands on a forested hill in Maine.

The spot — on a beautiful hillside deep among hemlock and birch and proximate to geologic kettles left by the receding ice age — overlooked a seasonal stream and vernal pool dominated by a large lichen-covered stone that I named my "Thinking Rock." This is where the transcendental kid in me often escaped with my dogs to read, think, smoke a pipe and get right with God and nature.

The bittersweet irony is that the forested retreat I long had in mind never got off the ground, so to speak, because, in the blink of an eye, my own kids were grown and heading off to college, and I was feeling an unexpected gravitational pull of my old Carolina home.

Impossible as it once seemed, I said goodbye to the rugged timbered house and English garden-in-the-woods that I spent nearly two decades building and cultivating, a place where I fully expected to end my days and eventually become part of the landscape when who I am moved on, leaving only a trail of ashes behind.

But life, to paraphrase Emerson, is full of compensations. A few years back, my wife and I purchased a lovely old bungalow that once upon a time was my favorite house in the heavily forested neighborhood where I grew up — two doors away, in fact, from the house where my family lived for almost 40 years.

I joke that I've all but completed the Sacred Redneck Circle of Life.

A large part of the place's allure, I must admit, was the two-car and workshop garage in back that featured a funky little second-floor apartment you reach by climbing a set of rickety wooden steps that take you to rooftop height amidst century-old white oak trees.

Because the house sits on perhaps the highest point in the entire neighborhood, the first time I climbed those steps and turned around to check out the view, my heart leapt like a kid up a tree.

From just under the white oak canopy that reminded me of the arched ceiling of a Medieval cathedral — providing wonderful cooling shade all summer — I could see the world with a bird's-eye-view: vaulting trees and rooftops across the neighborhood, not to mention birds and squirrels galore, passing clouds, a huge patch of sky by day, a glorious quilt of stars by night.

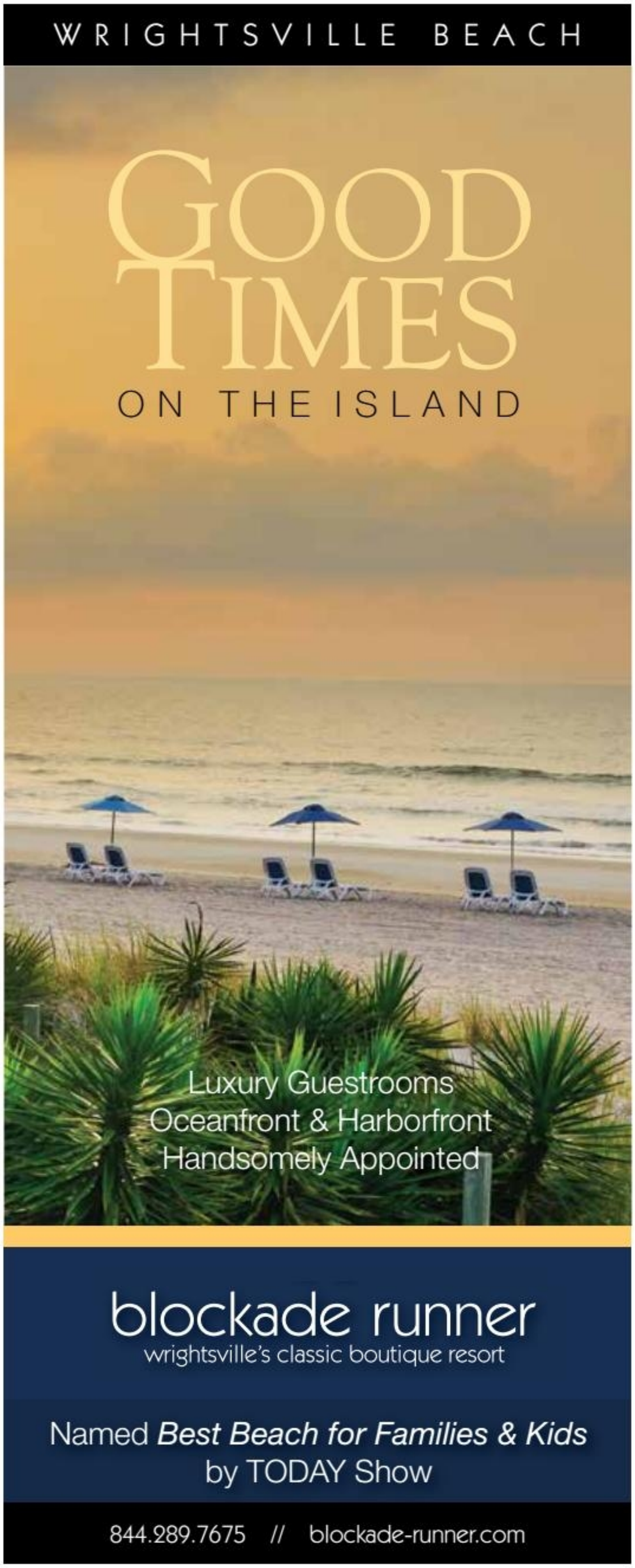
Suddenly I had the treehouse I'd always dreamed of owning, this one equipped with electric power and heat, small kitchenette and bathroom with fully functioning toilet and shower. The cheap dark-wood paneling gives it a perfect rustic air and a couple of overhead fans keeps the place cool in summer. If it isn't quite worthy of *Treehouse Masters*, it fits me like lichens on a thinking rock.

Just outside the door, I hung a large set of Canterbury chimes from a stout limb of the massive white oak at the foot of the steps. When the wind blows a certain way, I swear I hear the first five notes of "Amazing Grace."

These days, if you visit my "treehouse," you will find a pair of comfortable reading chairs (one of which my dog Mulligan occupies when she's officially on duty), several bookcases filled with favorite books, a French baker's table where I write, a wicker daybed where I sometimes seek horizontal inspiration on late afternoons, various vintage posters and prints I've collected from four decades of journalism and travel, a cabinet case filled with some of my own books and a few awards, a second cabinet that holds "Uncle Jimmy's Genuine Real Stuff Museum," framed photos of my children and a pair of large rare portraits of Walter Hagen and young Fidel Castro, themed lamps (a blue coat soldier, a Bengali elephant, a monkey climbing a palm tree), several busts (Ben Franklin, Alexander the Great, a Templar knight), three sets of old golf clubs, a full golf library, several checkered golf flags, and a large replica of the first American flag with thirteen stars in a circle of blue.

Nobody in their right mind would want all this stuff in their real house. But like the Swiss Family Robinson, this oddball collection from a long journey home has finally found the perfect place in my cabin in the sky.

Contact Editor Jim Dodson at jim@thepilot.com.



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The Language of Design

Design NC and the Cameron Art Museum join forces for "The Language of Design: Inside and Out," a daylong forum and luncheon featuring talks by New York interior designer Alexa Hampton and noted Greensboro landscape architect Chip Callaway. Interior designer Marshall Watson will moderate a panel discussion. May 17, 10 a.m. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 S. 17th Street, Wilmington. For more info and tickets: designnc.org.

72nd Annual North Carolina Azalea Festival

The largest festival of its kind in North Carolina, the 72nd Annual Azalea Festival reigns supreme with a great mix of parades, live entertainment and parties all over town. This year's highlights include musical acts Hank Williams Jr., Tyler Farr and Ice Cube; the Airlie Luncheon Garden Party (break out the big hats and seersucker); and the crowning of Queen Azalea, as well as house and garden tours, art shows and fireworks — something Azalea for everyone. April 3-7. Various locations. For a full schedule of events and tickets, visit ncazaleafestival.org.

…and Gardens

The 66th Annual Cape Fear Garden Club Azalea Garden Tour, one of the longest-running garden events in the South, is in full bloom, beginning with the April 5 ribbon-cutting ceremony at 10 a.m. The 2019 Garden Tour ticket ($35) includes photographs of the gardens, a map of garden locations and trolley stops and three "Secret Gardens," only accessible by trolley. Tickets are valid for all three days. Proceeds from the tour are reinvested in the community with grants for beautification and horticultural projects. April 4-7, 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. For more information and tickets: capefeargardenclub.org.

Blues on the Beach

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the Pleasure Island Seafood Blues and Jazz Festival in Kure Beach, and the theme is the "Year of the Woman." Appropriately, the headliners include Grammy-nominated Danielle Nicole, international blues sensation Ana Popovic, and the Allman Brothers-inspired Heather Gillis Band. Among the other performers: Luxuriant Sedans, Nina Repeta, The Rhythm Bones, and Carl Newton's Jazzy Review. April 13 and 14. Fort Fisher Air Force Recreation Area, 118 Riverfront Road, Kure Beach. For info and tickets: (910) 458-8434 or pleasureislandnc.org/events.

Master Gardener Plant Sale

One of the largest plant sales in the Southeast, the Master Gardener Plant Sale at the New Hanover County Arboretum features thousands of locally propagated plants — shrubs and ornamentals, annuals and perennials, herbs and vegetables, azaleas, including reblooming Encores, and many varieties of Japanese maples. The volunteer carpenter staff will be offering handcrafted bird houses and plant stands. Admission: Free. April 10-14, Thursday-Saturday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Sunday noon to 5 p.m. New Hanover County Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. For info: (910) 798-7660 or nharboretum.org.

Stand Up and Paddle

The Wrightsville Beach Paddle Club's ninth annual Carolina Cup is a weeklong stand-up paddleboard competition (in 2015 it became the world's largest SUP race), featuring more than 12 clinics and five races. Saturday: the 5K Harbor Island Recreational Race; the 10 K Money Island Open Race; the dreaded 13K Graveyard Elite Race; the Graveyard Elite Outrigger and Surfski Race. Sunday: Kids Race.

Spectators of all ages are welcome — there will be live music, food, drinks, and world-class athletes and races. April 24-28. Blockade Runner Beach Resort, 275 Waynick Blvd., Wrightsville Beach. Registration and info: wrightsvillebeachpaddleclub.com/carolina-cup.

Sedaris Fever

Fans of David Sedaris will have two opportunities this month. On April 13, see *The Book of Liz*, David and Amy Sedaris' twisted play about Sister Liz, a member of the cloistered Squeamish order who makes cheese balls from a secret recipe. Tickets: $20-$47. TheatreNOW, 19 South 10th Street, Wilmington. Info: theatrewilmington.com. On April 15, UNCW presents "An Evening With David Sedaris," a one-night performance by the humorist and best-selling author. Tickets: $30-$90. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. For info: (910) 962-3500 or uncw.edu/arts.

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MAGAZINE

Exploring the Carolinas

Early settlers and the Tuscarora War

By D.G. Martin

"In the middle of a dark September night in 1711 in Carolina, John Lawson found himself captive, tied up and flung in the center of the council ring of the Tuscarora Indian town of Catechna," writes Scott Huler on the opening page of his book, *A Delicious Country: Rediscovering the Carolinas along the Route of John Lawson's 1700 Expedition*, recently published by the University of North Carolina Press.

Lawson did not survive. Tradition says he was tortured to death, with wooden splinters pushed into his skin and set afire. On earlier visits to American Indian villages, Lawson had witnessed and described this type of torture.

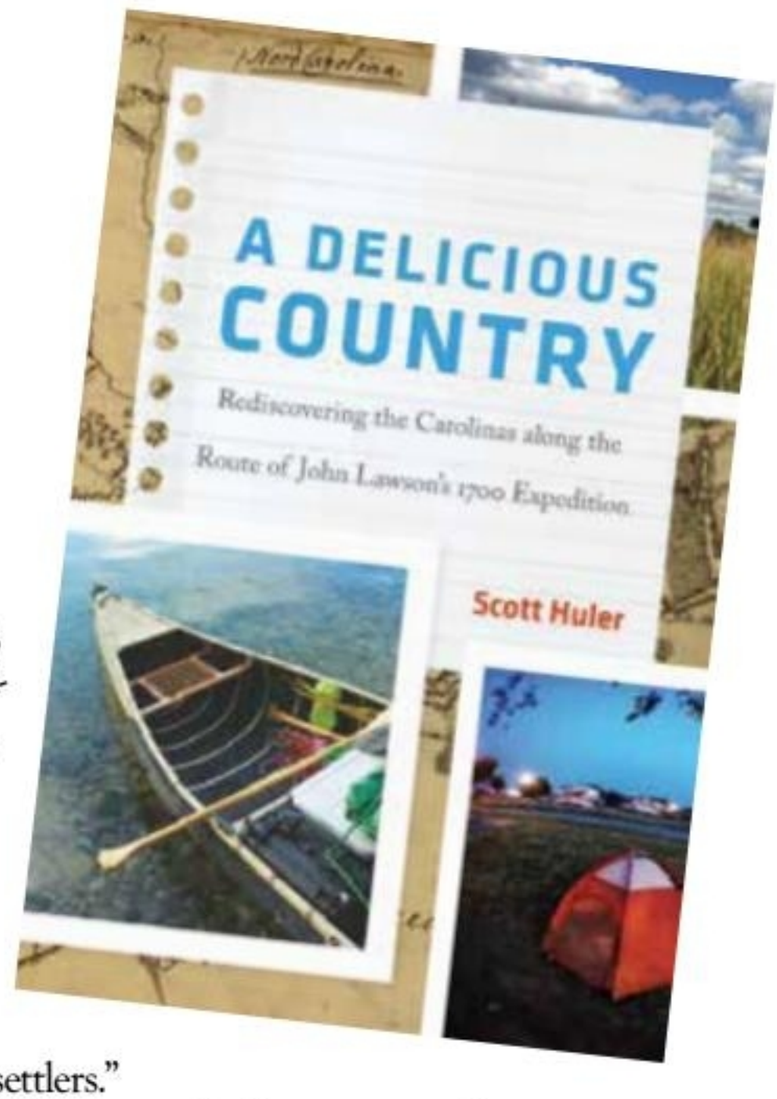
Who was this Lawson, and why did the Tuscarora put him to death?

In 1700, English-born John Lawson was a newcomer to North America. Almost immediately upon arriving, he set out on foot from Charleston to explore the endless forests of the backcountry Carolinas. The notes he took became the basis of a book, *A New Voyage to Carolina*, first published in 1709 and still a classic for its rich descriptions of flora and fauna and the conditions of the native peoples.

Huler wanted to follow in Lawson's footsteps. He looked for a modern book that explained where Lawson went and described what is there today. When he found that no such book had been written and that no one had even retraced Lawson's journey, he thought, "That's for me!"

Huler could have made the trip of several hundred miles in a day or two in a car. But he wanted to go slow, seeing today's landscapes and peoples at the pace Lawson traveled.

He shares his travels in his new book. Like most other readers of Lawson, Huler is impressed with his descriptions and attitudes about the native populations. Lawson visited Sewee, Santee, Sugeree, Wateree, Catawba, Waxhaw, Occaneechi and Tuscarora Indians. Huler writes, "He stayed in their wigwams, ate their food, trusted their guides. And he emerged with their stories, for some of which he is the only source in the world."



Lawson, Huler continues, "documented native communities, buildings, agriculture, hunting, dance, trade, and culture through eyes clear, thorough, and respectful. Lawson depicts the natives as fully human — not some subspecies perceived only in comparison to European settlers."

Lawson's words were, "They are really better to us than we are to them."

But Lawson found the native populations to be in a precarious situation. "The Small-Pox and Rum have made such a Destruction amongst them, that, on good grounds, I do believe, there is not the sixth Savage living within two hundred Miles of all our Settlements, as there were fifty Years ago."

Traveling Lawson's route through the rural Carolinas, Huler found a discouraging similarity. Contemporary rural and small town landscapes are littered with empty manufacturing plants, corporate farms and forests, empty main streets and deserted houses. Three centuries after Lawson, Huler found that "our world would teeter: a way of life dying in the countryside, implacable new forces once again balancing an entire civilization on a knife edge."

Setting aside this discouraging report, Huler's adventures and misadventures on the road entertain and inform. He is the best type of tour guide, one who is well-informed but not at all pompous. His wry, self-deprecating sense of humor helps his serious medicine go down smoothly.

For Lawson, his explorations and the reports about them opened the door to prominence and high positions in the young colony. That success came to a sudden end in 1711 when he was captured and executed by the Tuscarora Indians he had so greatly admired and praised.

Why did they kill him?

To find out, I turned to University of North Carolina-Wilmington professor David La Vere's *The Tuscarora War: Indians, Settlers, and the Fight for the Carolina Colonies*. Lawson is one of the main characters of La Vere's book. La Vere sets out in detail the background for the Tuscarora War that began in 1711 with Lawson's execution and a series of attacks by the Tuscarora on the thinly populated and, for the most part, recently arrived settlers in the New Bern area.

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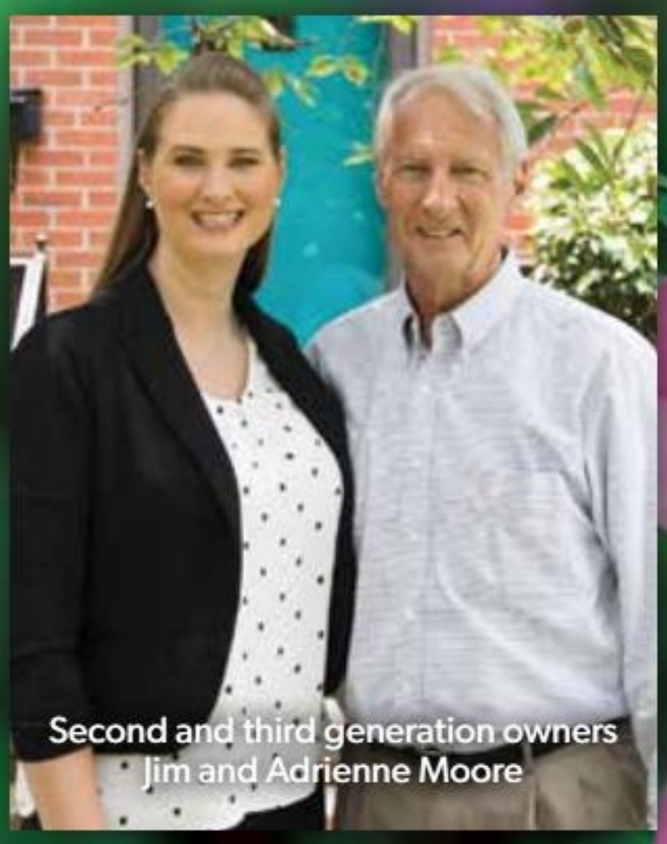

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Earlier, in the late 1600s and early 1700s, North Carolina was only sparsely settled, mainly by Virginians moving south into the lands around the Albemarle Sound. They encountered small groups of Indians and were generally able to subdue them.

However, to the south and west, the mighty Tuscarora Indian strongholds stood as a barrier.

Meanwhile, Lawson's glowing descriptions about his travels in the colony sparked the interest of the Lords Proprietors, who were looking for ways to encourage settlement. Lawson met a minor Swiss noble, Christoph de Graffenried, who worked out a plan with the Lords Proprietors to transport groups of German refugees and Swiss paupers to lands along the Neuse River near today's New Bern.

These lands overlapped with the territories of the Tuscarora, who became increasingly threatened by the growing European presence.

La Vere writes that after overcoming odds, "de Graffenried's colony of Swiss and German Palatines at the mouth of the Neuse River was thriving." Therefore, he continues, "expansion up the Neuse seemed a real possibility."

Lawson and de Graffenried made a trip up the Neuse, through Tuscarora lands, to scout sites for future settlements.

"All the while, the Indians grew more worried and angry as the abuses against them escalated and their complaints fell on deaf ears. That spark came in mid-September 1711," according to La Vere, with this trip up the Neuse.

The local Tuscarora king, or chief, offended and threatened that his territory had been invaded, captured Lawson and de Graffenried and put them on trial for their lives. When one of the more radical Indian leaders berated him, Lawson lost his temper. "He argued back, his anger and sarcasm apparent to all."

Lawson, of course, was doomed and shortly executed. His companion, de Graffenried, remained in custody while the Indians planned and carried out their first attacks on September 22, 1711, appearing at first as friendly visitors to the settlers' farms and then striking suddenly from ambush when the defenses were down.

North Carolina's efforts to beat back the

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Tuscarora were unsuccessful. The colony didn't have enough manpower, firepower, or money. Help finally came from the wealthy sister colony to the south. South Carolina sent two expeditions to relieve its northern neighbor.

The first expedition, led by John Barnwell, set out with a force of about 700 men. Only 35 were regular militia. The rest were Indian allies. The results were mixed, and the Tuscarora remained a threat. The second expedition, led by James Moore and made up of 113 militia and 760 Indians, wiped out the Tuscarora at their stronghold at Neoheroka, near present day Snow Hill in Greene County, and opened the door to settlement in the interior of North Carolina.

What explains why South Carolina so enthusiastically aided its neighbor and how the South Carolina Indians were persuaded to provide the critical manpower? "Above all," La Vere writes,"it was a chance to enrich oneself by looting the Tuscarora towns and taking slaves, which they could sell to waiting South Carolina traders for guns and merchandise."

This sad footnote to North Carolina's early history shows that the colonists secured their victory in the Tuscarora War only by facilitating and participating in the enslavement and sale of captured Tuscarora.

Scott Huler's route through today's Carolinas following Lawson's path

In South Carolina: Charleston, Intracoastal Waterway, Buck Hall Recreation Area, Mouth of the Santee River, Hampton Plantation, McClellanville, Jamestown, Lake Moultrie and Lake Marion, Congaree National Park, Pack's Landing Rimini, Mill Creek County Park, Poinsett State Park, Horatio, Boykin, Camden, Hanging Rock Battleground, and Lancaster.

In North Carolina: Pineville, Charlotte, Concord, Kannapolis, Salisbury-East Spencer, High Rock Lake, Denton, Asheboro, Burlington, Saxapahaw, Hillsborough, Durham, Morrisville, Raleigh, Garner, Clayton, Flowers Crossroads, Wilson, Greenville, Washington, and Bath.

D.G. Martin hosts North Carolina Bookwatch, *which airs Sundays at noon and Thursdays at 5 p.m. on UNC-TV.*

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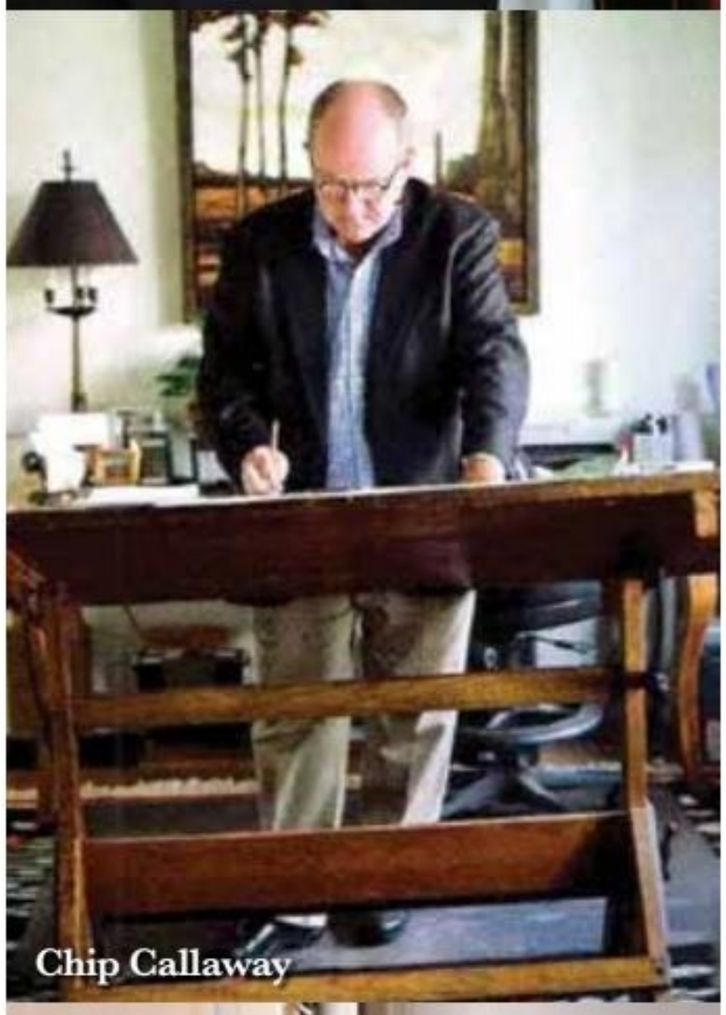
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With the Author Himself

An internal dialog

By Wiley Cash · Photographs by Mallory Cash

Wiley Cash and I have known one another for almost 42 years, but I do not see him very often. Work as writer-in-residence at the state university in Asheville has him driving back and forth across the state quite a bit, and if you are to believe his social media accounts, he is usually sprinting through one airport or another, behind on a writing deadline and struggling to find Wi-Fi to return students' emails. That's what he gets for giving up his smartphone.

Life has been pretty busy since Wiley's first novel, *A Land More Kind Than Home*, was released in the spring of 2012. Since then he has published two more novels, taken a few teaching positions, and moved a couple times. He and his wife, Mallory, who is a photographer, are also the parents of two young daughters.

A few weeks ago I sent him a text. (He can still text with a flip phone. It just takes him longer.)

Me: let's get a beer
Wiley: high cholesterol. Been jogging. Coffee?
Me: does beer give you high cholesterol?

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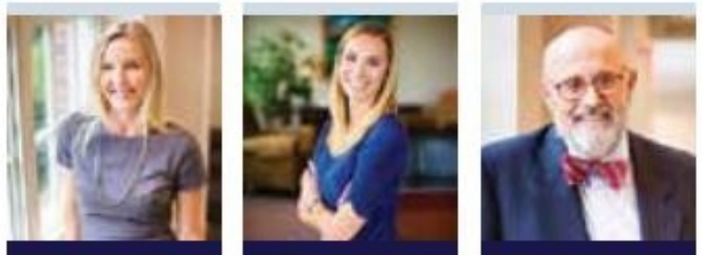

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DRINKING WITH WRITERS

Wiley: beer makes it harder to jog
Me: where should we meet for coffee? Prefer a place that also serves beer.
Wiley: our house Thursday morning

Mallory meets me at the door when I arrive at their home near Carolina Beach.

"His majesty is still in his robe," she says.

"Late night?" I ask.

"No," she says. "He just works from home. His robe is like his employee uniform."

"You work from home too," I say. "You're not wearing your pajamas."

"Maybe the robe life is the exclusive lifestyle of authors."

I look up and see Wiley coming down the stairs in a bright red robe and gray bedroom slippers. We shake hands.

"It's been a while," Wiley says. "When did you get glasses?"

"Last year," I say.

He strokes his white beard and tucks his (graying?!) hair behind his ear.

"We're getting old," he says. He smiles. "At least you are."

"I guess that means we're having coffee instead of beer."

He smiles and leads me down the hallway, past the kitchen, and into a sitting room that has recently been converted into his daughters' playroom. He offers me a seat in one of two tattered yellow armchairs.

"When we bought this house we thought it would be a great place to host parties," he says. He smiles and looks around the room. "Turns out it's been a great place to host children's books and games and toys."

While Wiley makes coffee in a French press, we discuss what has kept him busy since his most recent novel, *The Last Ballad*, was published in the fall of 2017. He tells me

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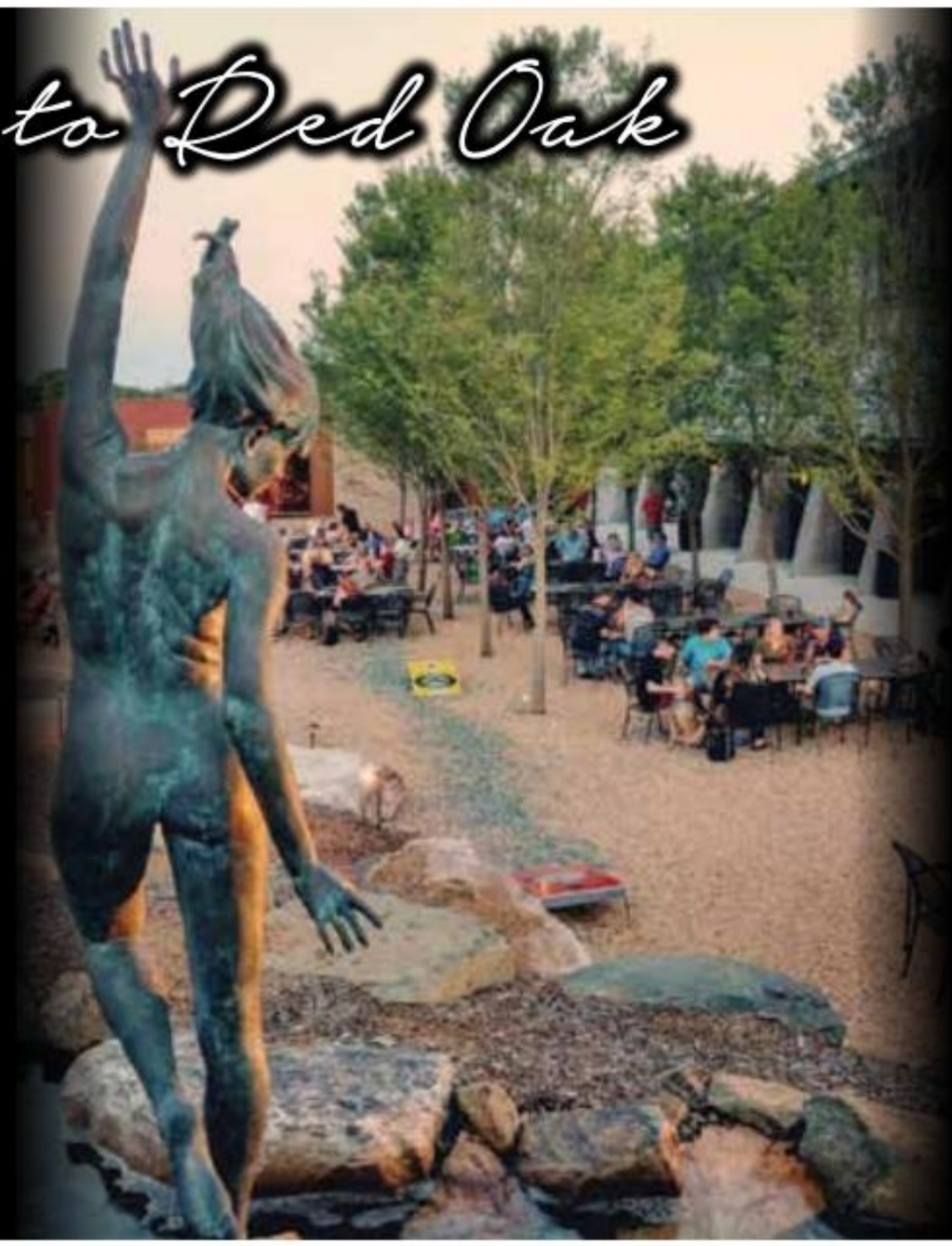

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about the Open Canon Book Club, an online book club he founded to introduce readers to diverse books by diverse authors, and the Land More Kind Appalachian Artists' Residency, a retreat he and Mallory and two friends founded in West Virginia. He is also teaching, a lot: Aside from his work as writer-in-residence at the University of North Carolina-Asheville, he also teaches in the Mountainview Low-Residency MFA Program. In his spare time he is trying to work on a new novel, one that is already behind deadline.

"How are you finding the time and space to write?" I ask.

He pours me a cup of black coffee, pours one for himself, and then sits back in his chair.

"It's hard," he said. "I'm really busy, but everything I do is about writing in one way or another. When I teach, I teach writing. When I give a talk at a library or university, I'm talking about writing. When I'm reading books for the book club or reading through applications for the artists' residency, I'm thinking about the written word and how it works to achieve an author's intentions. Literally everything I do pertains to writing. My life is one huge literary conversation that never stops."

"It all sounds like a lot of work," I say. "Are there many rewards?"

"Aside from my mom constantly asking if my editor's mad at me because my novel is late? Sure. There are a lot of rewards," he says. "I'm so lucky that my one-time hobby has become my full-time occupation, or occupations." He looks over his shoulder at a wall of glassed-in bookshelves in the living room. "Speaking of rewards," he says, "you want to see a really cool one?"

He gets up and walks into the other room. When he returns he is carrying a small statue on a pedestal. "Meet Sir Walter Raleigh," he says. He slides one of his girl's chairs away from a children's table and sets the statue on the chair. He makes a show of polishing it. "I received this a few weeks ago from the North Carolina Historical Book Club. I love it."

"You seem like a proud father," I say. "Speaking of fatherhood, how has it changed your writing?"

"Being a parent has deepened the experience of storytelling in ways that have really surprised me," he says. "Our oldest, who's 4, is obsessed with narrative. I probably tell six or seven stories a day about saber tooth tigers and early people and ghosts and pirates. A few nights ago I heard her telling Mallory about how telling stories can cause them to feel true. That left a huge impression on me because that's what I want to do as a writer. I want to tell my readers fictional stories that they believe nonetheless.

"And our 3-year-old is really interested in telling stories. A few days ago, she told Mallory a story that began *It was the first day of school. His mother came to get him. He was not sad, but quiet.* Are you kidding me? I don't write opening lines that beautiful."

"If your girls told a story about you, what would it be?" I ask. Wiley takes a sip of his coffee and looks toward the window.

"It was the first day of writing a new novel," he says. "His mother had already called to check on his progress. He was not sad, but tired."

"Pretty good lines," I say.

"Thanks," he says. "They're yours if you write my biography."

Wiley Cash lives in Wilmington with his wife and their two daughters. His latest novel, The Last Ballad, *is available wherever books are sold.*

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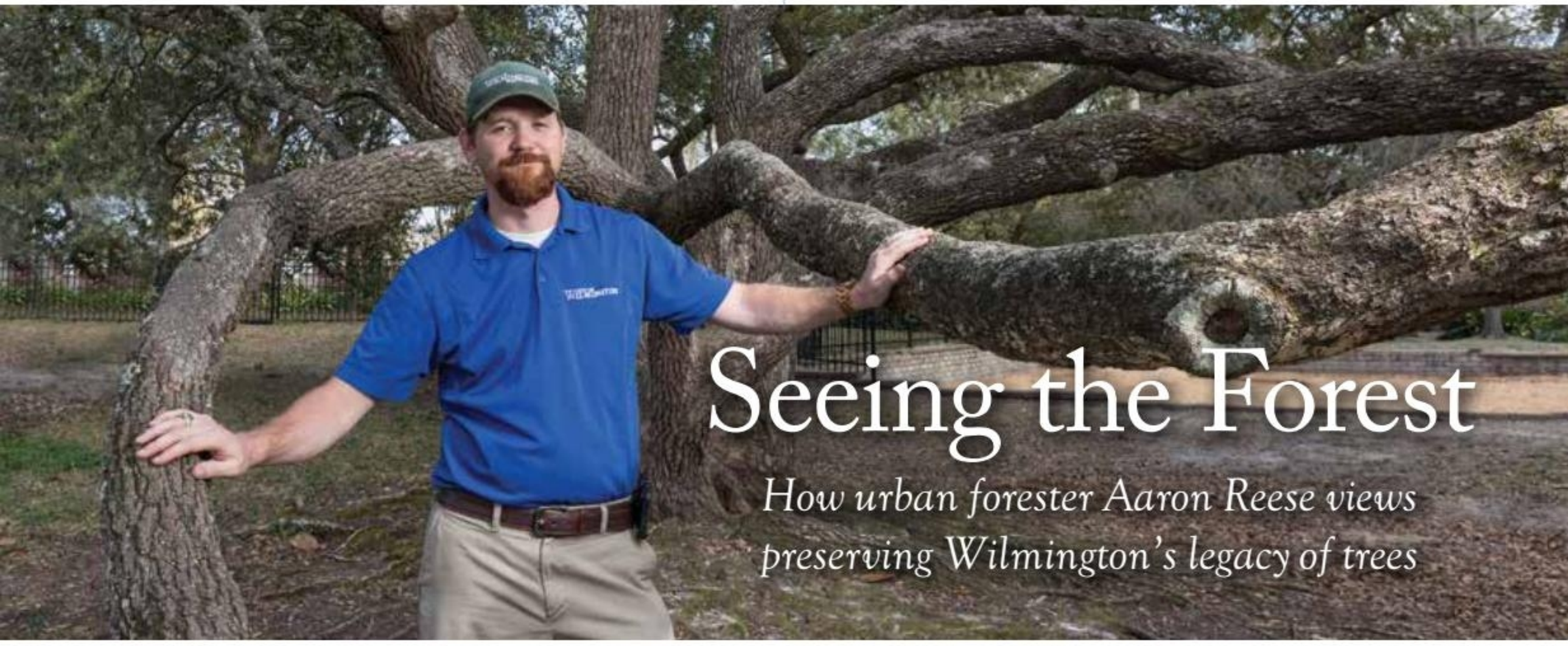

Seeing the Forest

How urban forester Aaron Reese views preserving Wilmington's legacy of trees

By Dana Sachs

Aaron Reese: Forestry Management Supervisor, City of Wilmington

What's the goal of forestry management in a city?

To preserve, maintain and enhance the urban forest. "Urban forest" is a term that groups all the trees in the city — public and private.

What does that mean in terms of what your team does day-to-day?

Our department runs the tree crews in the city. And I work with other departments — planning, stormwater, streets — to review tree protection measures.

Tree protection bleeds into many of the development issues now being debated in the city.

It does. It's closely tied with development right now.

I think about recent commercial developments, like the Pointe at Barclay, which used to be a large tract of woods. Now it's buildings, a parking lot and a few small trees. How do you see the city responding to these debates in regard to the preservation of trees?

The city is working on rewriting the land development code. There may be some drastic changes, there may be some small changes. We don't have a final draft at this point.

Can you give any examples of what might change?

Not specific examples. Groups such as the Wilmington Tree Commission and the Alliance for Cape Fear Trees are doing a pretty good job of educating the community on the benefits of retaining trees. And the Green Infrastructure Center is completing a six-state study on urban tree canopies that includes Wilmington. That's shown what we can do, what's been done in other areas, and how we can use trees to help mitigate the effects of stormwater runoff and flooding.

In a recent article about that study, *The Port City Daily* reported that runoff from pavements is 36 times higher than runoff from forests. For example, an inch of rainfall would produce 750 gallons of runoff in a forest and 27,000 gallons of runoff in a parking lot. That's significant.

It's a big difference. But that study is not saying we need to completely forest the city and have no new development whatsoever. It's saying that there are ways to reduce the amount of runoff and you can use trees to help with that.

What else has the city learned from the study?

We're not sure how we're going to use the information yet, but we've learned about measures we could take on tree retention standards on private and public property. And using trees as green infrastructure. Your gray infrastructure within a city is all your hardscapes and streets and buildings and sidewalks and all that. Trees are the living part. They do take up an impressive amount of stormwater. They are actually cleaning and filtering stormwater, so you don't have to dump all of that into the system.

Can you name a local development project that has been innovative in terms of preserving trees?

I'm trying to think of anybody that's gone above and beyond code requirement. Live Oak Bank (on Tiburon Drive in Wilmington) does a very good job of working around trees. They've actually pushed retention of trees. Their new buildings blend in with the

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natural setting. And with their landscaping components, they bring in quite a few trees that are much larger than what's required, and they also bring in more, just to help out and get almost instant maturity back into their landscape.

It's more typical for developers to plant much smaller trees?

Yeah. The minimum required size for shade trees is 2 to 2 1/2-inch caliper. That's typically a 9- or 10-foot tree. It varies a bit with species.

If we're talking about tree canopy, we have to talk about Hurricane Florence. Do you know how many trees Wilmington lost?

We don't have an accurate count yet, but upward of a thousand, for sure. Just street trees. The number of trees lost on private property — right now we don't have an accurate way to measure that.

What does that mean to the city to lose that many trees?

In terms of stormwater mitigation, it's significant, to say the least. Not only that, but losing the tree canopy coverage: You're driving around and you see areas that are in the sun that were not in the sun this time last year. There are severe gaps as a result of the storm. It will take years to regain that. So, yes, it's not just stormwater. It impacts aesthetics, and sometimes even a sense of place. You go to a place and it doesn't quite look the same. It can be disorienting at times. A lot of people use trees for landmarks and don't even realize it.

Did any tree come down in your yard that felt like a particular loss for you?

You mean a single tree?

Yeah, like, I lost a plum tree that I really loved.

Well, the only really large tree that I have in my yard is a maple that will have to come down as a result of damage. It's a loss, but I'm not completely heartbroken.

Are there specific trees in Wilmington that, when they're gone, it's a blow to the whole community?

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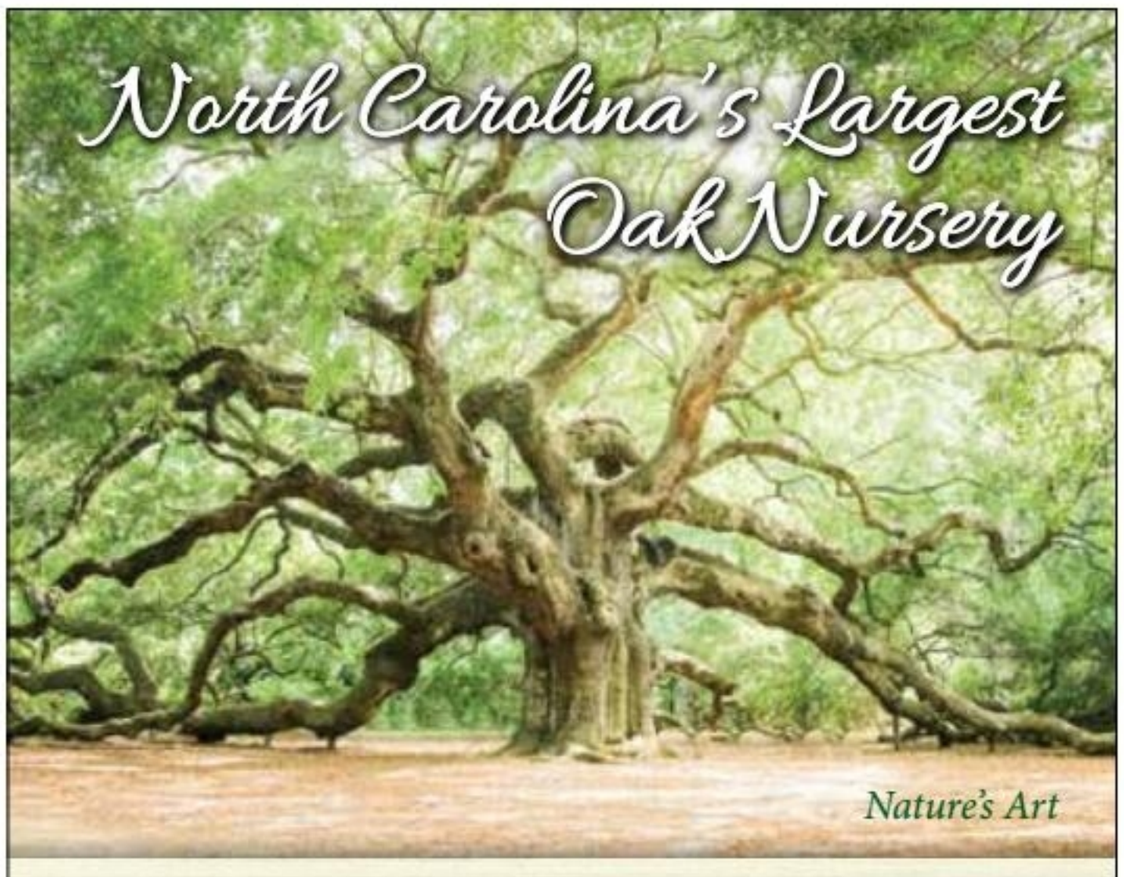

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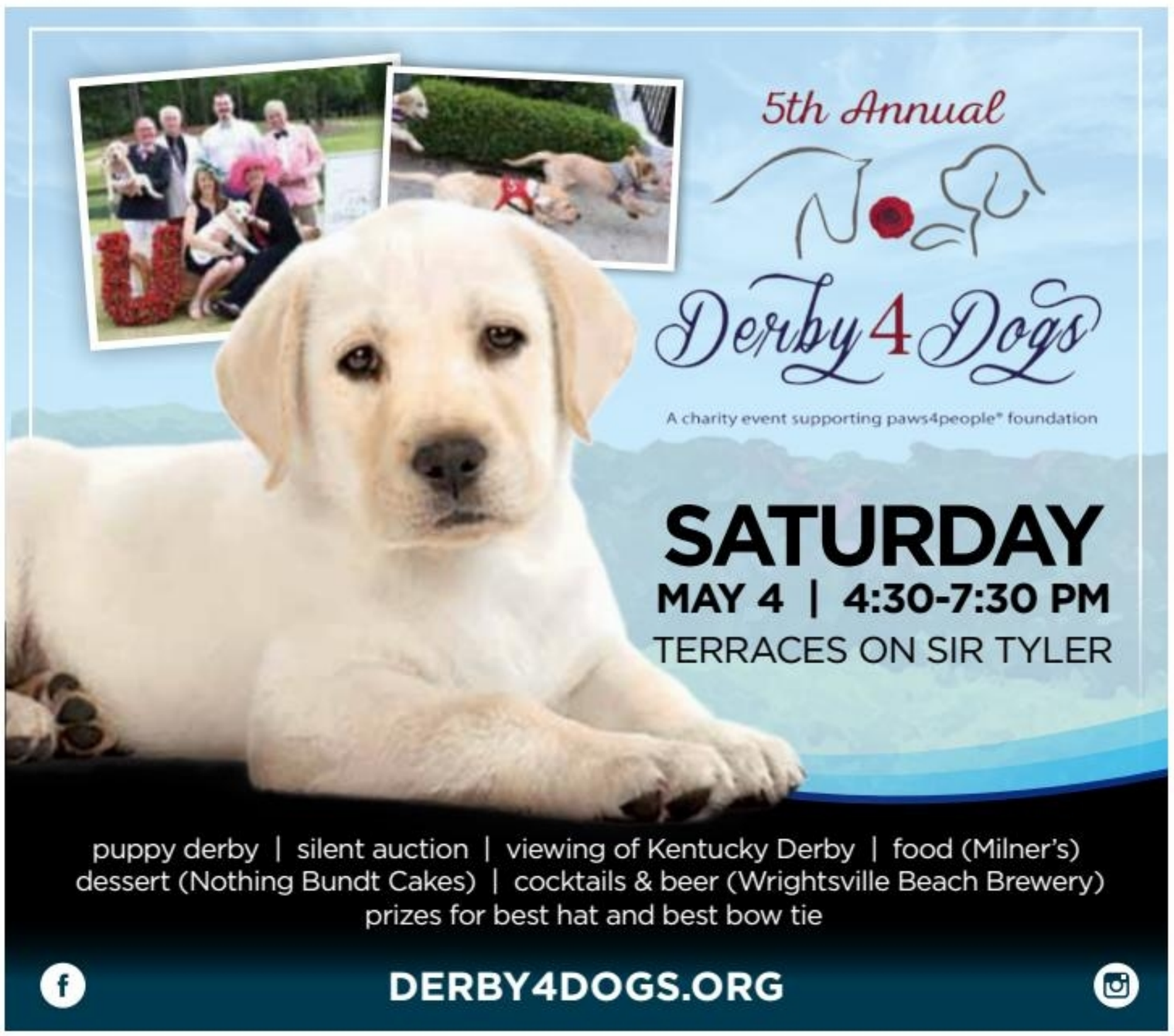
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THE CONVERSATION

Market Street by the Sonic restaurant, had to be taken out as a result of the Department of Transportation project there. We looked into relocating that tree and re-establishing it at the new fire station on Cinema Drive, a move of about 900 or 1,000 feet, but just ran into monetary issues. The cost of the move and all the residual costs — relocation of utilities, traffic control on Market Street to dig up the road — would have run close to $300,000. The money was not there.

Honestly, driving through Wilmington, it sometimes feels like I'm watching trees come down every day. Is there something that local people can do to promote preservation?

People can reach out to a developer to work with them. The Publix supermarket out in Ogden is a good example of that. The community got together and worked with the developer, who actually changed the plans to save a lot of the trees. The developer paid to have one large tree, a 70-inch diameter live oak, moved in order to protect it.

But there are still so many examples of the opposite, like on Airlie Road, a huge wooded property that's just a dirt patch now. You know that property?

I'm familiar with it, yeah. There's a lot going on with that that I would not feel comfortable talking about.

So, when you think about Wilmington's cityscape, say, 10 years from now, what's your worst-case scenario in terms of trees?

Going backward is off the table completely, so I think our worst possible scenario would be to keep our standards as they are currently.

What will you plant to replace the maple in your yard?

I've actually not decided yet, but it will probably be more than one tree. My neighborhood has lost a lot of trees through the last several hurricanes. I'm trying to do what I can.

Dana Sachs' latest novel, The Secret of the Nightingale Palace, *is available at bookstores, online and throughout Wilmington.*

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Greens, Eggs and Ham

The Devil in the details

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES STEFIUK

By Jane Lear

Something about April makes me nostalgic for — well, I'm not sure what, exactly. The first young vegetables are juicy, tender and exquisite; they are what spring tastes like. Farmers and home gardeners alike have earth-caked hands and knees. They are working hard, being patient. Waiting for the world to wake up and warm up.

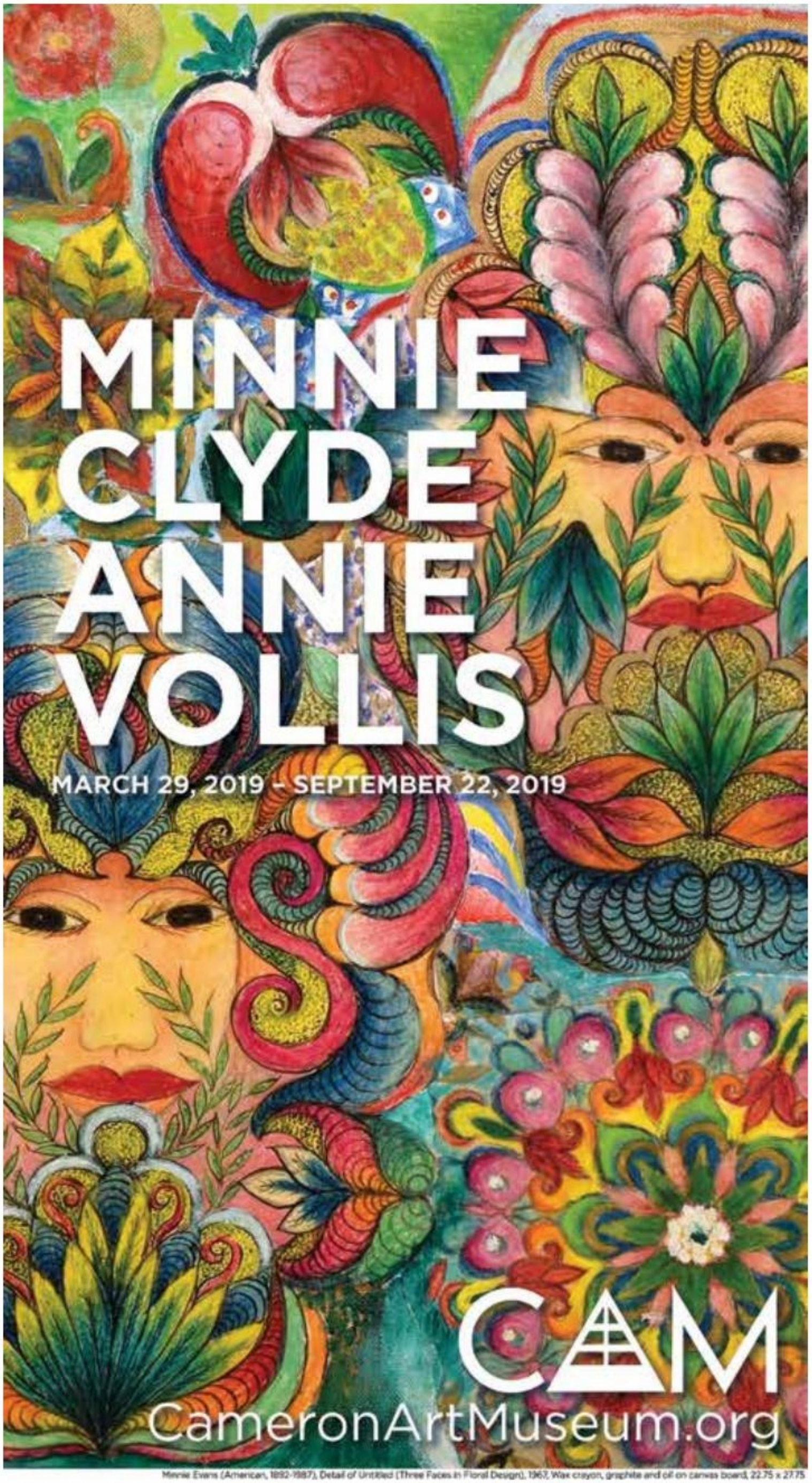
As a child, my Aprils were often spent chasing after my mother, who was intent on foraging wild watercress before it flowered and then disappeared until the following year. She'd picked up the knowledge that the plant had been used both culinarily and medicinally during ancient times, and as we waded in frigid creeks and teetered on rocks midstream, she'd treat me to a homily on how brilliant the Greeks were and how exceptional watercress was. (Watercress is indeed rich in vitamins K, A, C, E and B6, as well as phosphorus, magnesium and calcium. Ounce for ounce it contains more antioxidants than broccoli.)

For Easter and other spring occasions, we might be treated to watercress soup served in my grandmother's thinnest porcelain cups. For the most part, though, we enjoyed the peppery, pungent sprigs fresh in a salad, dressed with nothing more than salt, lemon juice and olive oil — back then, not all that easy to find down South, and thus one of my mother's most valued condiments.

These days, I avoid wild cress unless I know for sure that the stream it comes from is pristine; instead, I go for the cultivated stuff at the supermarket. It wilts beautifully under a steak, roast chicken or seared piece of fish.

And it makes a wonderful bed for deviled, or stuffed, eggs — the quintessential springtime hors d'oeuvre. I'm crazy about them, especially those made by my longtime friend Rick Ellis. He's a noted food stylist and culinary historian who is never afraid to serve stuffed eggs at the fanciest dinner party. "They're always the first thing to disappear," he said, and he's right.

What gives Rick's eggs their rich, round flavor is butter, and he credits Julia Child with the idea. One of the things you learn from someone like Rick (or Julia) is that simplicity doesn't necessarily mean



Minnie Evans (American, 1892-1987), Detail of Untitled (Three Faces in Floral Design), 1967, Wax crayon, graphite and oil on canvas board, 22.75 x 27.75

ease of preparation, but instead perfection and balance in a dish. That's why it's important, for instance, to push the cooked egg yolks through a fine-mesh sieve rather than mash them with a fork. It's what gives the filling such great body.

Another great spring favorite is deviled ham — reason alone for serving a tender, juicy baked ham at Easter. The use of the culinary term "deviled" to mean highly seasoned with spices or condiments dates from at least the early 19th century, but the kind of deviling most Southerners come across isn't fiery at all, but instead gets a sharp nip from Dijon mustard, often with an assist from a pinch of cayenne.

And if you spoon it onto toast points, you have lovely little canapés, which were, Rick told me, one of the first types of hors d'oeuvre served with drinks. My mind leapt immediately to Jack Benny, who once defined an hors d'oeuvre as a ham sandwich cut into 40 pieces.

Rick, however, was thinking about another icon, Fannie Farmer, and after a quick search in his library, read aloud from his 1918 edition of Fannie Farmer's *Boston Cooking School Cook Book*, which laid out the newfangled concept of canapés. "Canapés are made by cutting bread in slices one fourth inch thick, and cutting the slices in strips . . . or circular pieces. The bread is toasted, fried in deep fat, or buttered and browned in the oven, and covered with a seasoned mixture of eggs, cheese, fish, or meat."

As for the deviled ham, Rick found a recipe for ham sandwich spread seasoned with mustard, salt, pepper and vinegar in the original (1931) edition of *The Joy of Cooking*. It rightly belongs to the far older category of potted meats, of course. Two centuries ago, I would have had to pound the cooked ham (or partridge, ox tongue, hare, etc.) to a smooth paste with butter in a stone mortar, then season it with salt, pepper and perhaps mace or cayenne. Pressed into small crocks and sealed with clarified butter, my potted ham would have kept about two weeks in a cool, dry place.

No recipe re-enactments for me: I'll take my food processor and refrigerator and be grateful, thank you. The recipe for deviled ham, which is based on Marion Cunningham's reborn classic, *The Fannie*

Farmer Cookbook (published in 1979), is simple and delicious. No way it'll last two weeks.

Rick Ellis' Stuffed Eggs

Makes 24

1 dozen large eggs
1/4 cup mayonnaise
1/4 cup Dijon mustard
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
1/4 teaspoon cayenne
Coarse salt and ground white pepper
Finely snipped fresh chives for garnish

1. Place the eggs in a pan large enough to hold them in 1 layer and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil, cover the pot, and let sit 15 minutes. Drain and run under cold water until eggs are completely cool.
2. Peel the eggs and cut in half lengthwise. Remove the yolks and rub through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl. Add the mayo, mustard and butter, and mix until smooth. Stir in the lemon juice, cayenne, and a generous amount of salt and white pepper. Transfer the filling to a pastry bag fitted with a 1/2-inch tip (or jury-rig out of a plastic zip-top bag with a corner snipped off).
3. Pipe the filling into the egg white halves and sprinkle with chives.

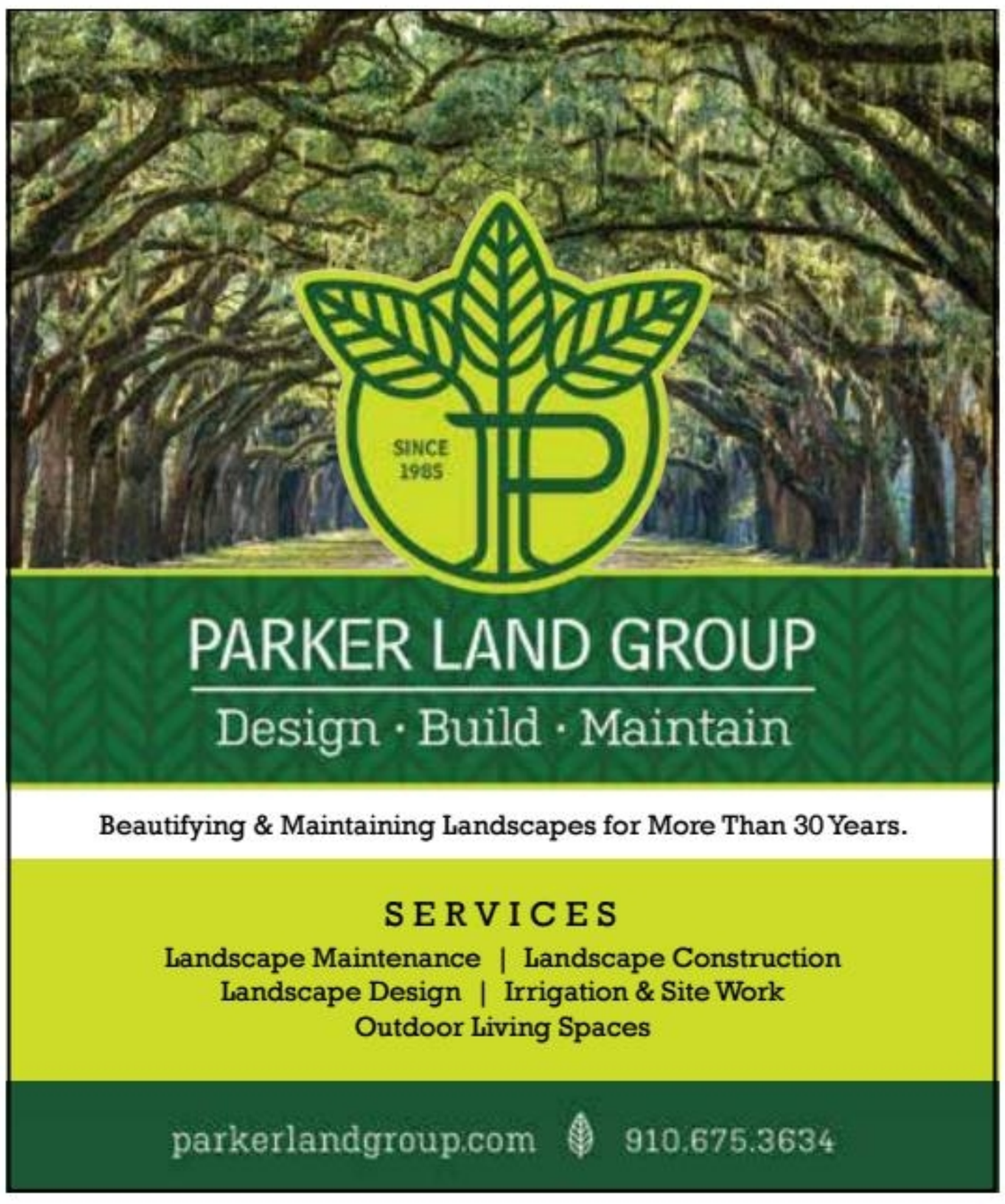
Deviled Ham with Toast Points

Makes 2 cups

About 8 slices best-quality white sandwich bread
2 cups (about 1/2 pound) chopped cooked city-cured (baked) ham
1 tablespoon minced onion
2 to 3 teaspoons Dijon mustard
A small pinch cayenne
An even smaller pinch ground mace (optional)
1 tablespoon minced sweet pickle
2 tablespoons mayonnaise or unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

1. Heat oven to broil and set rack about 6 inches from heat. Put the bread slices on a baking sheet and broil until pale golden and crisp on top, about 1 minute or so. Flip the slices and broil until pale golden on other side, about 1 minute. While bread is still hot, trim crusts and cut into triangles or strips. Once cool, the toast points will keep in an airtight container up to 1 day.
2. Purée the ham until smooth in a food processor. Scrape it into a bowl, then stir in the rest of the ingredients. Pack the deviled ham into a small crock and refrigerate, covered.

Jane Lear was the senior articles editor at Gourmet *and features director at* Martha Stewart Living.



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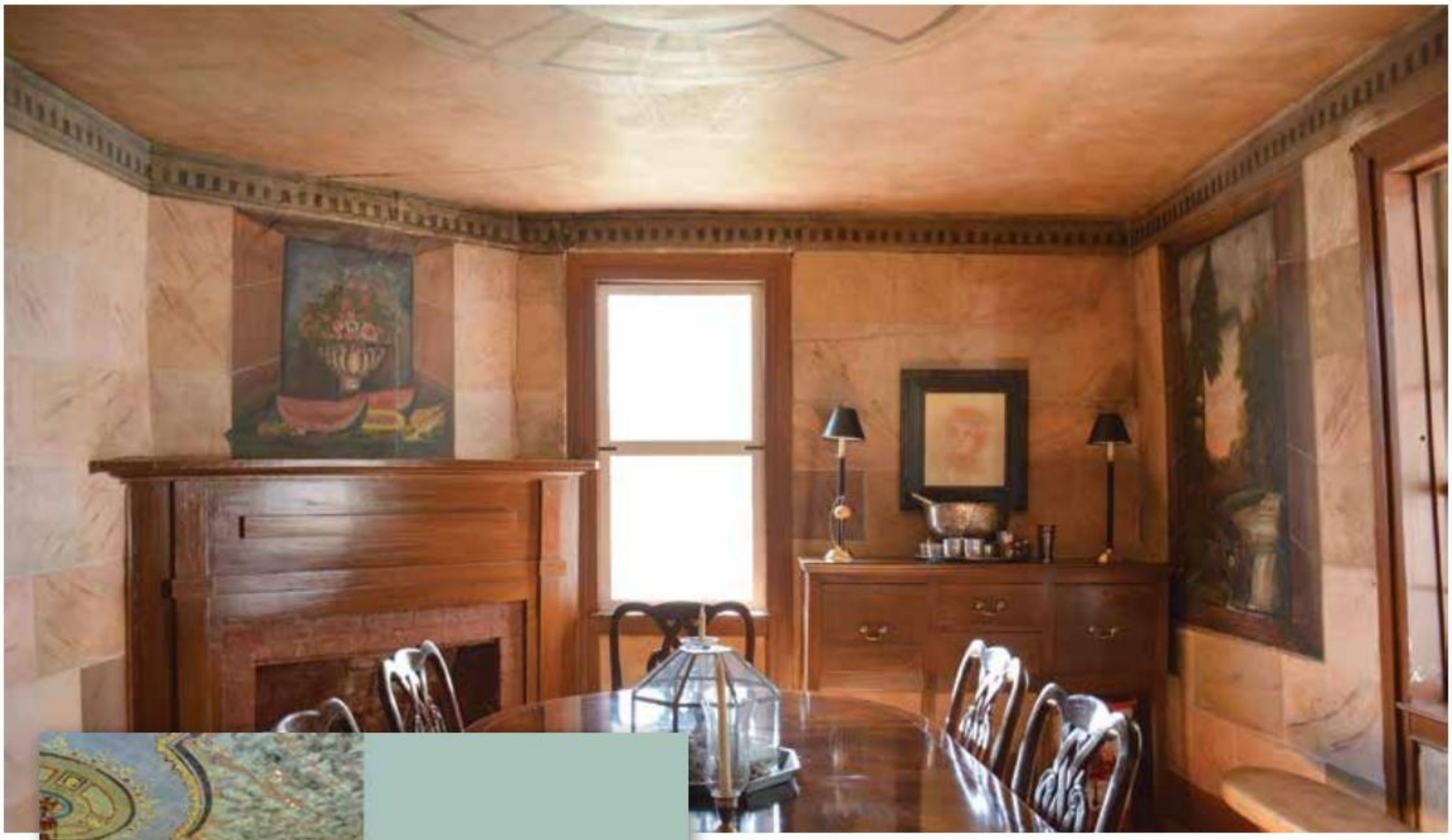
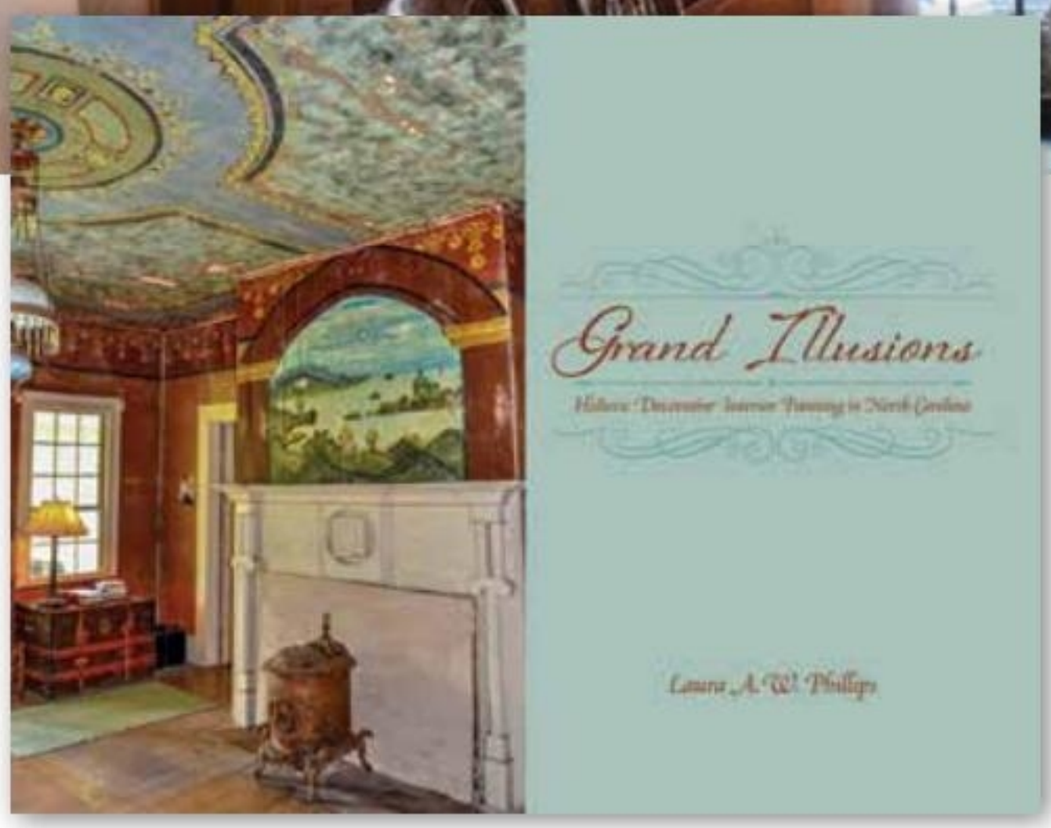


Above: Parlor, Hauser-Reich-Butner House



By Laura A. W. Phillips

Decorative interior painting provided homeowners, especially during the 19th century, with a wide range of options for embellishing their houses. By employing an "ornamental painter"or perhaps giving free rein to a talented family member, a homeowner could endow a single room or an entire house with a lively and fashionable character. Decorative interior painting enlivens houses and other buildings throughout North Carolina, from the Coastal Plain through the Piedmont to the mountains. Hundreds of examples have been recorded, but these likely represent only a fraction of what once existed or, in some cases, still exists but remains undiscovered. The clientele for decorative painting spanned a broad range of economic levels. As might be expected, some clients were wealthy landowners and entrepreneurs who occupied large and impressive houses. At the same time, a surprising number were middling farmers who lived in modest vernacular dwellings. Thus, decorative painting was commissioned both by those who could afford fancy wallpapers and expensive woods and marbles and by those of lesser means who could acquire the services of a traveling painter in exchange for not much more than room and board. What all these clients had in common was that they found decorative painting to be a desirable way to adorn their homes.

North Carolina houses present a full range of decorative painting types, including freehand, wood-grained, marbled, smoked, stone-blocked, stenciled, tromp l-oeil, and scenic painting. Nearly half of the known houses with decorative painting display more than one type, as is true of the examples cited previously. In some, the painting program carries throughout the house, while in others, it is confined to a single,

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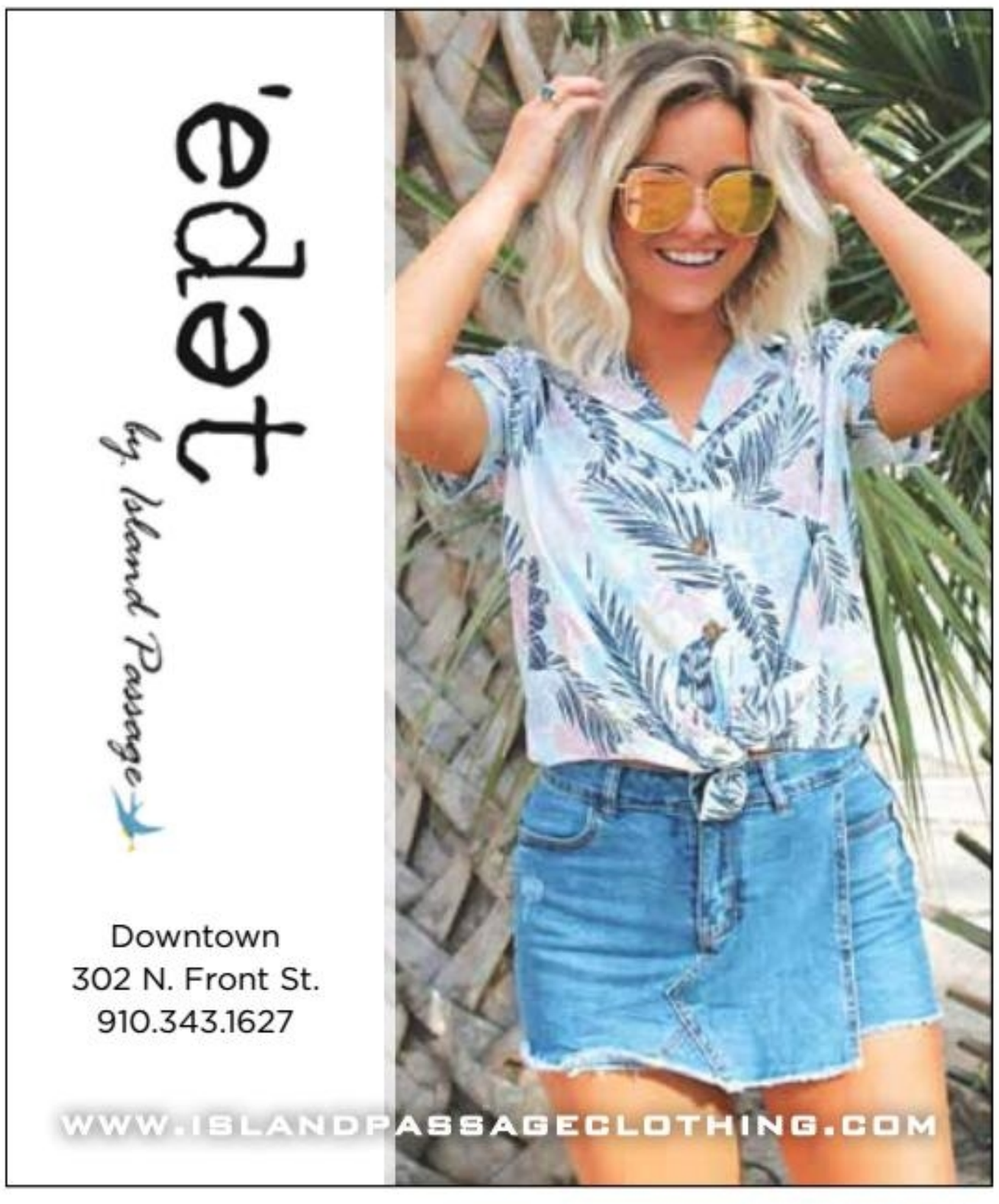
Left: Coolmore, trompe-l'oeil detail

Right: Coolmore staircase

semi-public room, usually the parlor. A popular combination was to have doors wood-grained and mantels and baseboards marbled, which provided a luxurious though subtle and restrained character to the formal rooms. The most outstanding multiple types combined in a well-thought-out, comprehensive scheme. Painting often bore characteristics in common with architectural and furniture styles of the period in which it was created, including the Federal, Greek Revival, and late Victorian. And whatever the period, painters executed their work in a range of expressions, from the sophisticated academic work of highly trained painters to the sometimes bizarre examples of painting by artists with more limited technical skills and powerful imaginations.

Excerpted from the new book *Grand Illusions: Historic Decorative Interior Painting in North Carolina,* by Laura A. W. Phillips. Distributed by the University of North Carolina Press



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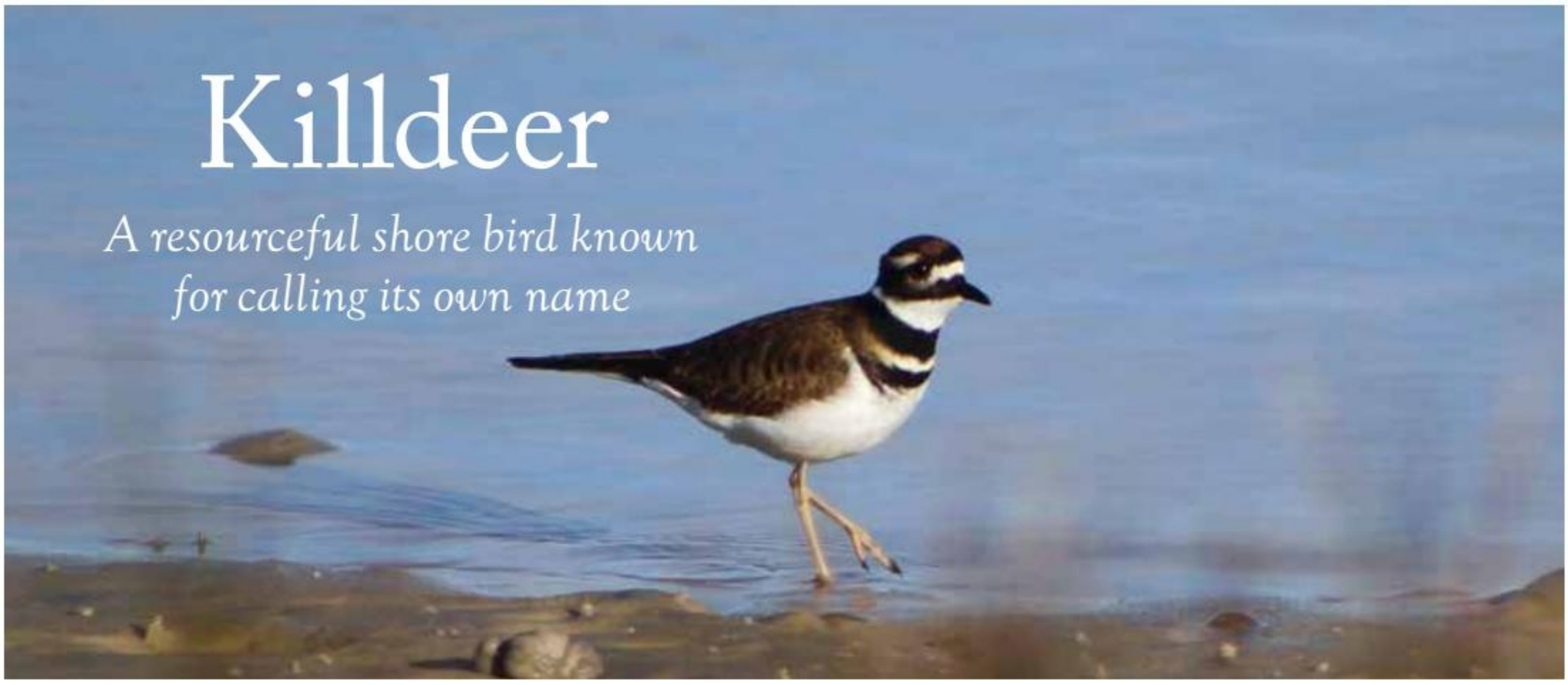

Killdeer

A resourceful shore bird known for calling its own name

By Susan Campbell

The killdeer is a small brown and white shorebird that is now busily nesting all along the coast of North Carolina. In fact, it can actually be found here year-round in the right habitat, and it need not be all that wet. In fact, for egg laying, the drier the spot, the better! Although our sandy soil is ideal for these birds, it turns out that killdeer are widespread in North America, with most of the population living away from the water's edge.

This robin-size bird, not surprisingly, gets its name from its call — a loud "*kill-deer, kill-deer*" — which can be heard day and night. During migration, individual birds frequently vocalize on the wing, high in the air. Adults will circle above their territory, calling incessantly in early spring.

On the ground, killdeer are a challenge to spot. They blend in well with the dark ground, hiding in plain sight against the mottled surface of a tilled field or a gravel surface. Killdeer employ a "run-and-stop" foraging strategy as they search for insect prey on the ground. As they run, they may sir up insects that will be quickly gobbled up as the birds come to a quick halt. Although they live in close proximity to humans, they are quite shy. Killdeer are more likely to run than fly if approached. When alarmed, they frequently use a quick head-bob or two. This may be a strategy to make the birds seem larger than they appear.

During the winter months, flocks of killdeer concentrate in open, insect-rich habitat such as ball fields, golf courses or harvested croplands. Here you may see them foraging along the water's edge, either on the beach or the sound. But come spring, pairs will search out drier substrates, preferring sandy or rocky areas for nesting. They may even use flat gravel rooftops or — believe it or not — parking lots. The female merely scrapes a slight depression, where she lays four to six speckled eggs that blend in with the surroundings. She will sit perfectly still on her nest and incubate the eggs for three to four weeks. If disturbed by a potential predator, the female killdeer will employ distraction displays to draw the intruder away from the eggs. This may go so far as to involve feigning a broken wing; the mother bird will call loudly, and with her tail spread, to be as noticeable as possible, she will limp along dragging a wing on the ground. This "broken wing act" can be very convincing, giving the predator the idea that following the female will result in an easy meal. Once far enough from the nest, the killdeer will fly off, not returning to the eggs until she is convinced the coast is clear. Should distractions by the adults not be effective, the pair will find a new nesting location and begin again. The species is a very determined nester. Killdeer are capable of producing up to three broods in a summer.

When the eggs hatch, it will be a synchronous affair. As soon as they have dried off, the downy, long-legged young will immediately follow their mother away from the nest to a safer, more protected area nearby. They will follow her, being fed and brooded along the way, for several weeks. Once they are fully feathered, the young will have learned not only how to escape danger but how and where to find food for themselves.

So, if you hear a "*kill-deer*" over the next few months, stop and look closely: You may be rewarded with a peek into the summer life of this fascinating little bird.

Susan would love to receive your wildlife sightings and photos. She can be contacted at susan@ncaves.com.

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The Heaven of Lost Umbrellas

They have to be somewhere;
those ribbed and fabric
servants who have held
off storms so grandly, quietly,
and with such solemn
unassuming elegance.

They come to us
in colors but mostly
that ubiquitous black.
Plaid, polka dots, birds,
butterflies, Monet's
water lilies . . . he must
be laughing at the irony.
Van Gogh's sunflowers,
one grand, glorious sun
of yellow. We have
monograms,
advertisements,
golf ones big enough
to cover a room
of golfers . . . except
it never rains on a golf
course. Nor in this
way out of the way
heaven of lost things.

Here umbrellas lie
folded in resting pose.
They hold their own
handles, their work
for the moment
completed. Yet
they wait to be
unfurled
and walked
wherever
they need to go.

– Ruth Moose

The Coastal Modernist

Michael Kersting is reshaping our beachfront environment — and the architects he works with

By J. Michael Welton

If Wilmington architect Michael Kersting ever retires — an unlikely step at this stage in the 50-something modernist's career — he'll leave behind an epic, two-part legacy.

First, there's his catalog of residential work on Wrightsville Beach, Figure Eight Island and the Intracoastal Waterway. His designs range from neo-traditional to modern, from shingle-style to crisp-and-white, and from a one-story, midcentury modern renovation to a four-story tower overlooking Banks Channel. All are one-of-a-kind, because Kersting never repeats himself.

Then there's the series of young architects who joined his practice right out of school, cut their design teeth at his hierarchy-free firm, then set out on their own across the state and nation. Because Kersting has no office door, he works side-by-side with eight other designers in a kind of collaborative architectural gumbo that simultaneously poses questions and seeks answers. Even interns are encouraged to find and defend architectural solutions for $4 million homes. And they do.

A New Mexico native, Kersting slipped into Wilmington after grad school at N.C. State's College of Design and a brief gig in Santa Fe. His wife, a landscape architect he met in Raleigh, was a Delaware native who wanted to head back East. So he scored an interview with Wilmington architect Ligon Flynn, also a College of Design graduate and a designer who had earned a legendary reputation on the Carolina coast.

"Ligon was a very talented, important architect around here," says Kersting. "After school, he formed his own firm in Raleigh and somewhere along the way he got to know the developer at Figure Eight Island and was one of the original architects for it."

That led Flynn to establish his firm in Wilmington. He created the early aesthetics of Figure Eight, first with its clubhouse and then with residential work. "Over the years he designed some remarkable homes," Kersting says. "He was more about the experience — to set the house in the landscape for a wonderful interaction between indoors and outdoors, and understand the client and the design for that specific place."

Flynn's residential work — 30 homes on Figure Eight Island alone — was modern, but not really of the midcentury category. It was more a response to sun, wind, sea and sand. "Certainly there was as much glass as possible to take advantage of the ocean and the marsh side as well," he says. "His were never the most beautiful buildings on paper — you had to go there and experience them in person. They were absolutely stunning."

Kersting joined Flynn in 1990, and stayed a year and a half — just long enough to discern a path to making his own coastal architecture. He got an appreciation for how to respond to the site and build on the ocean. "It's a bear, and you really have to listen to

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSHUA CURRY

the details," he says. "Still, none of us has duplicated what Ligon achieved — he had his own way."

Kersting set out on his own but eventually grew his operation to a staff of 12. The Great Recession knocked it down to three, but he's now back up to nine, including an interior designer. And business is thriving. "Work comes to us, and it's been that way for 15 years," he says. "Either it's a real estate person or a friend who's worked with us before — we have a quality that people seem to like."

That's true for Derek and Louise Wistanly's home at Wrightsville Beach. The Chapel Hill-based couple heard about the firm through two of their friends. "They were happy with him, the outcome and the design," Derek says. "They thought he should be a strong consideration on our shortlist."

The couple talked to another architect during their interview process, but chose Kersting. "He's knowledgeable and thoughtful and knew what we were thinking," Derek says. "There was the fact that he could capture what we wanted in the ultimate design."

Besides, there was chemistry. "He seemed to listen to us and his design style was along the lines we were thinking," Louise says. "He's almost an Audrey Hepburn of architects — very classy, with simple lines."

Some of that chemistry can be traced back to Flynn's ideas about understanding the client, and asking questions that help an architect exceed expectations. Besides bedrooms and baths and kitchens, Kersting wants to know about lifestyle and hobbies. "We spend a lot of time on programming — it's the second-most important thing, after the property itself," Kersting says.

His listening leads to learning about minimal standards for his clients' wants and desires. Then come more questions about what the firm can do to give them a better awareness of the landscape. What are its attributes? Those of the neighbor's property? What's the site's relationship to the water? "We get a sense for what's going on outside the windows," he says. "We want them to be in these places and not want to leave them — it's a huge objective."

It's a process that's paid off — in spades. Over the years, Kersting's firm has designed 30 homes on Figure Eight Island, 28 at Wrightsville Beach, 20 along the Intracoastal Waterway, and 15 that are creekfront. And they've done it in one of the most brutal environments in the country. "That's where the experience of some failure comes in, but paying attention to what other people do also comes into play," he says.

His material palette is designed for survival. Salt air will corrode anything metal, so the steel he specs has to be galvanized or stainless, an expense that's often a surprise to the client. "We try to be efficient with how we lay those things out, and we use natural finishes on materials," he says. "We use a lot of wood shingles — they just hold up."

Hurricanes are punishing as they try to push a home's windows in, so Kersting's architects call for a series of smaller openings rather than a single large one — and add shutters. "Rain at 100 miles per hour makes them vulnerable," he says. "And the homes are in a flood zone, so they have to be built on pilings, and we look at what can we do to make houses adaptable to flood waters."

In the end, though, Kersting aims for aesthetically pleasing architecture. "From the street, it has to be attractive," he says. "We use materials that are intended to make beautiful houses that interact with the landscape in a positive way."

Traditionally, an architect's practice is organized vertically, with a lead design principal at the top handing out assignments to junior members of the firm. "There's a head honcho who figures it all out and others add the little parts, like: '*You* get the stairway, and *you* get the plumbing,'" says Toby Keeton, a project architect in Kersting's office. "But here, everybody has a hand in everything."

It's a master/apprentice model, and it attracts a specific kind of talent that's self-guided and independent. "Here you really can change the way a project looks, which is appealing to a certain kind of person who may move on eventually," Keeton says.

The sheer quantity of work is remarkable, as is the architects' output. "We do crumple up a lot of paper before we show what we will actually build," says Keeton. "We've shown a client five thought-out designs before we start out with one — and that's not typical in an architect's office at all."

Keeton's currently at work on at least four projects in various stages of design, development and construction. One represents an expansion of the firm's reach — a residential addition in Raleigh for two art collectors. "It's more a gallery than a house," he says. "And we've got one under construction in Pine Knoll Shores, another in Morehead City and one in Wrightsville Beach."

All that's happening under Kersting's watchful eye, though he's as likely to seek advice from his project architects as they are from him. "If he's struggling with something, he'll go to someone younger — and we can go to him and he may see something he's dealt with before," says Mark Wilson, also a project architect at the firm. "He's hands-on *and* hands-off — he's guided by his overarching concept for the project."

All the while, Kersting strives to put his staff in a position to succeed, giving them room as individuals but always standing firmly behind them. "It's not a style that everybody gets along with. It takes a certain kind of personality to take things and run with them," Wilson says. "It takes a will and a drive, and he sets you up

for that and guides you and nudges you if you go astray. The working relationship is a fun relationship."

Over the years, a number of gifted architects have been attracted to the firm, working there for a time and then leaving to establish their own practices — in Wilmington, Raleigh, Boone and Albuquerque. "It's like a rock band that changes members," Kersting says. "I'm the lead singer who won't go away."

Among his alumni are Chad Everhart, who would leave in 2003 for graduate school, then teach at Appalachian State and practice in Boone; Kevin Pfirman, who worked with Kersting until 2001, then set up his own Wilmington firm in 2002; Don Dudley, who established his Albuquerque firm in 2001; and Hunter Coffey, who left Ligon Flynn's office to join Kersting in1996.

"Hunter was one of the first and earliest employees I had — for 10 years we collaborated on many projects," Kersting says. "I had a certain skill set and he did also, and we were able to collaborate and go from a firm with small projects to one with big ones."

Coffey left Wilmington in 2006 and set up his own firm in Boone, but he remembers well what Kersting gifted him. "I think what was really good about his office was that he gave me the room to be creative — he trusted me," he says. "He gave me the room to take some risks — we were never rehashing something we'd done before. We tried not to requote ourselves."

While he was there, Coffey would refer to Kersting as an enabler. "As long as you have talent, you can go as far as you want to here," Kersting says. "The unfortunate part is they also want to leave and go out on their own. Like Hunter — he's going to take over the mountain region."

Then there was Robby Johnston, who arrived at Kersting's office in 2003 and stayed for two action-packed years before he eventually cofounded the Raleigh Architecture Company. "He had so much

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICK RICOZZI

energy that he energized the whole office," Kersting says.

That was a two-way street, according to Johnston. On his first day at the office, Kersting sat him down and said he was thinking about a new window, and said: "Come back by lunch with four different treatments for it."

"He was trying to tell me that there's more to what I was drawing than just aesthetics — that it's about humidity, temperature swings and salt air," Johnston says. "It was important for him to establish that it's very serious work to start from the detail level and then work your way back to the larger concept."

Kersting's legacy, Johnston says, will be people like himself following his standard, working to his design ethic and to the quality that he's established during his career. Others still at the firm agree. "He's somebody who's holding onto a little bit of honest rigor and thoughtfulness about what this place really is," says project architect Keeton.

It's a quality that'll live on through other designers long after Kersting does retire, says project architect Wilson. That's especially true for himself and for Keeton, each of whom have been with Kersting for more than 10 years. Early next year, they're slated to be named the first partners ever at Michael Kersting Architecture.

That means the Kersting legacy of coastal modern architecture — directly descended from N.C. State and Ligon Flynn — will live for another generation in Wilmington.

J. Michael Welton writes about architecture, art and design for national and international publications, and edits a digital design magazine at www.architectsandartisans.com. He is the architecture critic for The News & Observer *in Raleigh and author of* Drawing from Practice: Architects and the Meaning of Freehand *(Routledge: 2015). He can be reached at mike@architectsandartisans.com.*

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SHAELYN YOUNGBLOOD AND MICHAEL BLEVINS

The Education of a Gardener

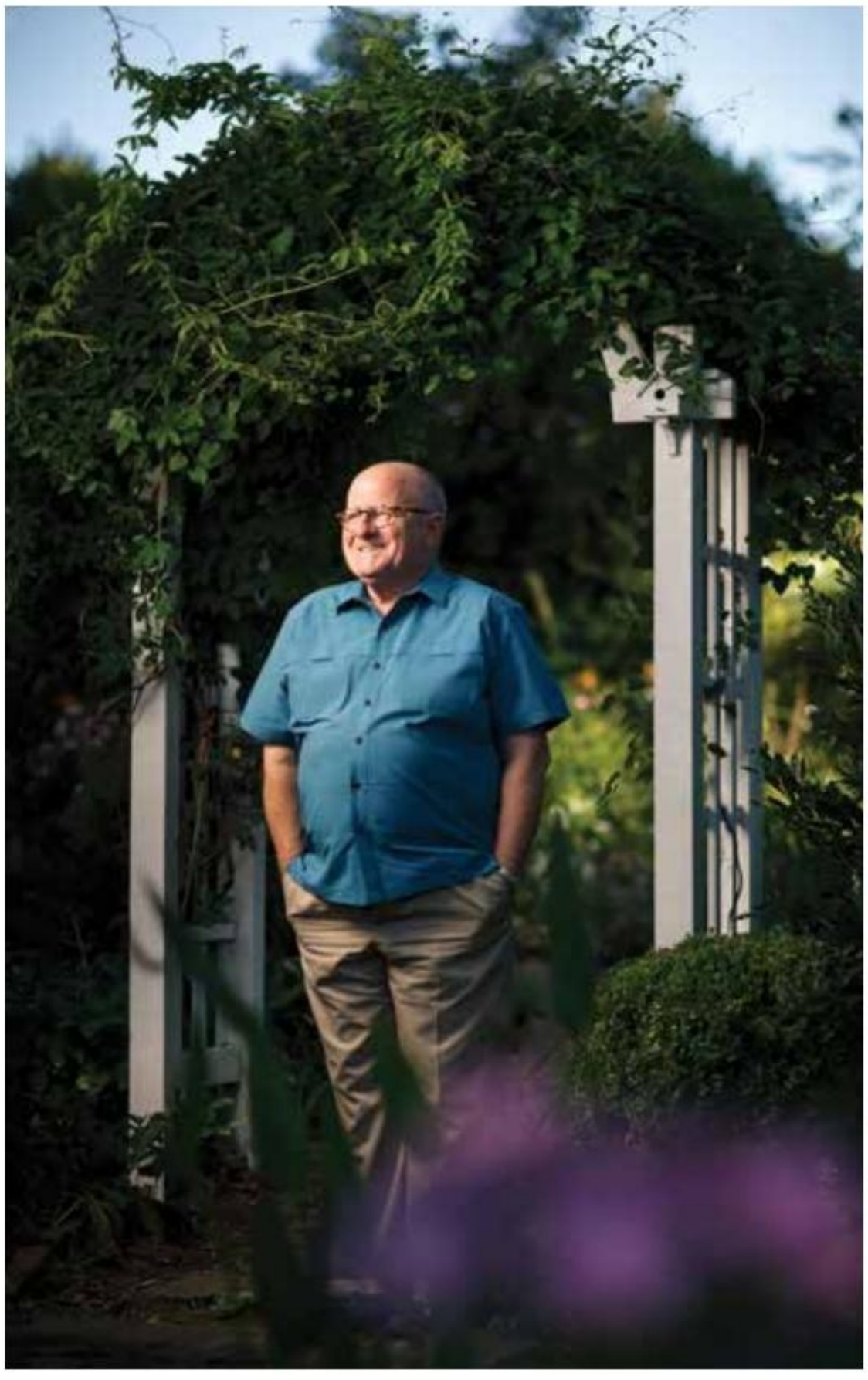
How Chip Callaway has established himself among the elite garden designers of America

By Barbara Sullivan

If you're one of the odd humans born with the garden-besotted gene, there are fewer things more pleasant than wandering through a magnificent landscape with a fellow gardener who appreciates the thrill of it all. Possibly you're traipsing through a deeply shaded wood, breathing in the cool, peaty air when you're greeted by an astonishing plant-creature spreading its 11-foot, cup-shaped leaves majestically above its boggy neighbors. If you were with a fellow plant nut you could say without embarrassment something like, "That's the biggest *Gunnera manicata* I've ever seen in my life, and wouldn't you just love to curl up inside it?" Staring lovingly at a plant superstar is just one of the quirks of a true hortophile — a label not inappropriate for North Carolina-born landscape architect Chip Callaway.

Early in his career, when Callaway was still an aspiring garden designer, he had the great good fortune of sharing his plant passion with one of the most venerated landscape artists in the world and spending time in the designer's own private garden. Callaway spent two summer internships with 20th-century garden legend Roberto Burle Marx in Brazil. The residencies with Marx — famous for his modernist designs incorporating native plants as structural elements and sculpting gardens in an almost Cubist style — were facilitated by another "star" of the gardening world, the late J.C. Raulston, for whom the NC State Arboretum is named. At the time, Callaway was studying for a master's in landscape architecture at NC State College of Architecture, a program that normally emphasizes the nuts and bolts of site planning and construction over the minutiae of plant taxonomy. With Raulston's help, however, Callaway was able to add a minor in horticulture, giving him the deep familiarity with plants — their shapes and textures, their habits and suitability for particular climates — which has contributed to his success as one of the premier landscape designers in the southeastern U.S. today.

Callaway is quick to credit all of the gardeners who have influenced him in his life, famous or not, and to tell you how lucky he's been to dig in the dirt with his fellow aficionados. These influences began with both sets of grandparents, who farmed in western North Carolina, growing "private pleasure gardens" of flowering shrubs, annuals and perennials alongside robust vegetable gardens in addition to the more official work of cultivating tobacco or raising livestock. He credits his dear friend Cordelia Penn Cannon, a garden writer and plant collector from Greensboro, for championing the use of native plants long before that trend hit the mainstream. He cherishes his contact with famed plantsman William Lanier Hunt, designer of the NC Botanical Gardens. And



PHOTOGRAPH BY JERRY WOLFORD AND SCOTT MUTHERSBAUGH/PERFECTA VISUALS

one man he never met, Russell Page, shaped Callaway's garden thinking as much as anyone, with his 20th-century classic, *The Education of a Gardener.*

Like many a true gardener, Callaway pulled weeds and rooted stock from the time he was very young, partly because he was besotted and partly out of a shrewd assessment of his situation. "I despised Sunday School," he says, "and I learned at an early age I could get out of going to church by volunteering to work in my

grandparents' vegetable and flower gardens."

Through his firm, Callaway & Associates in Greensboro, he has now designed more than 1,000 gardens, both private and public. Most of his clients live in the Southeast, but his work has taken him to England and spots in the northern U.S. as well. Some of his public gardens include the Alexander Graham Bell house in Washington, D.C.; the restored cemetery behind the Greensboro Historical Museum; and the Andy Griffith museum and playhouse in Mount Airy, North Carolina.

If asked to pick his favorite garden he'll say, "The last garden I visited becomes my favorite garden ever."

There have been challenges, of course. After Hurricane Hugo, when the garden at the 1838 Roper House in Charleston, South Carolina, had been decimated, he was asked to restore it to its former grandeur in time for a royal visit from HRH Prince Charles. Callaway arranged for a crane to be stationed in Charleston harbor big enough in itself to hoist yet another crane which could, in turn, lift a series of 26-foot-tall Southern magnolias with root balls measuring some 8 feet in diameter. And, working within the constrictions of the elegant and venerable Battery neighborhood, this hulking and unwieldy machinery was called upon to execute ballet maneuvers while heaving the behemoth trees ever so carefully over the 19th-century wrought-iron fencing which, like the house and all the surrounding properties, was of precious historic significance. To say nothing of the post-Hugo work crews on roofs and scaffolding all over town. "It was bedlam," says Callaway with a smile.

And what garden designer normally has Scotland Yard breathing down his neck? The Roper House and premises had to be swept for potential threats against the royal personage. The bad news: This meant cutting the job short by three days. The good news: Callaway and his crew got it done perfectly within the allotted time, and Prince Charles was duly impressed.

Being a sought-after garden designer involves not only learning your clients' tastes and getting a feel for the unique spirit of each new plot of land, but also dealing with client expectations. Gardens take time. Clients may not be patient. One of Callaway's clients told him he didn't have time to wait. "I don't buy green bananas," the client said. "I don't wait for anything." Callaway told him, in that case, he was going to need a stiff drink and some very deep pockets. And many of Callaway's clients have very deep pockets. This gives him leeway to stretch his imagination and create gardens perfectly suited to whatever house they may be complementing, and to the individual visions of his clients.

The hard, cold fact is that building a beautiful garden more often than not means editing, removing, doing away with existing trees and shrubs in order to create a cleaner overall picture. "Overgrown boxwoods are my pet peeve," Callaway says. "They are rarely, if ever, healthy, and they destroy the scale of the house they are supposed to be gracing."

Like all gardeners Callaway has favorite plants and color palettes. He loves hydrangeas, especially the native oak leaf (*Hydrangea quercifolia*), which thrives in gardens from the coastal plain to the mountains, and the Pee Gee (*H. paniculata*), with its giant green-white globes. In his own garden he grows gray-leaved plants for moonlight viewing like artemesia, dianthus, caryopteris, cardoon,

sea holly and lavender. He also loves gardenias but finds them to be finicky and short-lived. Possibly shocking for those of us living in the coastal Carolinas is the news that he has virtually banned the large-flowered Indica azaleas from the gardens he designs because he sees them as "one-week wonders" which, in his opinion, don't add a lot of design interest when not in bloom.

His own garden in Greensboro, where he has lived for 30 years, is a product of his devotion. "I love to give a garden a lot of formal structure with evergreens and then do my level best to make it blowsy with perennials and annuals, wreaking havoc with my formality. My garden looks pretty fussy in January, but it's a riot in May." Like the gardens of his grandparents, which continue to inspire him, his own garden is as much about the personal history of each plant and remembering the fellow gardener who shared it with him. That is the joy he continues to get from a hobby which turned into a passion, which evolved into an exceptional career.

Barbara Sullivan is a regular Salt *contributor and the author of* Garden Perennials for the Coastal South.

Chip Callaway will be a featured speaker at "The Language of Design: Inside and Out," a DesignNC symposium in conjunction with the Cameron Art Museum, on May 17th. For more information and tickets, visit www. DesignNC.org.

Return of the Birds

John James Audubon on exhibit again

By Jim Moriarty

It is such a small space to hold the passion of a lifetime.

In a corner on Level B of the North Carolina Museum of Art, John James Audubon's four bound volumes of *The Birds of America* are back on exhibit, joined by instructive videos and an immersive wilderness experience. There are roughly 200 extant copies of the so-called double-elephant folio version, comprised of 435 hand-colored, life-size prints. North Carolina's copy — minus two pages that were added later — was acquired in 1846 from Joseph Green Cogswell, a book dealer in New York, as part of a larger purchase by North Carolina's then-governor, William Alexander Graham, who was intent on expanding the state's library. It was transferred from the N.C. State Library to the museum in 1974. The last time the four volumes, each enclosed in its own specially constructed case, were on exhibit was July of 2016.

The engravings will be shown one page per volume — so, naturally, four at a time — for three months before changing them in the open-ended exhibit. The four on exhibit now include a wild turkey looking back as it crosses a Louisiana canebrake — the first plate produced in the project that consumed near the entirety of Audubon's life. "The hand-coloring is light sensitive so we don't want to expose it too long," says John W. Coffey, the museum's deputy director for Collections and Research. "People approach any art exhibit with different expectations. You have people that just stumble into the exhibition and, hopefully, they're engaged by the story of Audubon. And then there are people who are bird lovers. There are lots of those who venerate Audubon as a naturalist. There are people who just like fine art. What Audubon created were not just accurate renditions of the birds of America but also quite beautiful compositions. They held their own as works of art in their own right."

John James Audubon was born Jean Rabin, the "backstairs" child of the sea captain Jean Audubon and a French chambermaid, Jeanne Rabin, on Audubon's sugar plantation in Les Cayes, Saint-Domingue. The child's mother passed away from an infection mere months after the boy's birth. The sea captain had his son and the boy's half-sister (the daughter of a second mistress) transported to his

home in Nantes, France, in advance of the revolution that engulfed Saint-Domingue, eventually establishing the Republic of Haiti. His lineage a closely held secret to preserve his inheritance, the boy grew up in Nantes as Jacques Fougère Audubon during the Vendéan counterrevolution and the terror that accompanied it.

"Losing his mother in infancy, separated from whoever mothered him afterward on Saint-Domingue when he was shipped off to France at six, just months ahead of a bloody revolution, enduring dreadful days as a young boy in Nantes when Carrier [Jean-Baptiste Carrier] was emptying the prisons with slaughter and his family feared for its life, was a full burden of trauma for a child," writes Pulitzer Prize-winning Audubon biographer Richard Rhodes. "In maturity Audubon would expunge the stigma and the trauma from his family story by relocating his birth to Louisiana and to 'a lady of Spanish extraction . . . as beautiful as she was wealthy' when he knew full well that he was the bastard son of the chambermaid Jeanne Rabin." And, if in the fullness of time, he found his résumé in need of further padding, Audubon would sometimes claim to have studied under Jacques-Louis David, Napoleon Bonaparte's favorite neoclassicist painter.

Sent to America by his father to avoid conscription into Napoleon's army, Jacques Fougère Audubon became John James Audubon on his transatlantic journey, settling on his father's Pennsylvania farm, Mill Grove. "He had begun drawing birds in France," writes Rhodes. "Now, 'prompted by an innate desire to acquire a thorough knowledge of the birds of this happy country, I formed the resolution, immediately on my landing, to spend, if not all my time in that study, at least all that portion generally called leisure, and to draw each individual of its natural size and coloring.' This is retrospect, of course, but it catches the eighteen-year-old's excitement and bravado."

Audubon cut a dashing figure. The wife of a physician friend would describe the 30-something ornithologist and painter this way: "Audubon was one of the handsomest men I ever saw. In person he was tall and slender, his blue eyes were an eagle's in brightness, his teeth were white and even, his hair a beautiful chestnut brown, very glossy and curly. His bearing was courteous and refined, simple and unassuming. Added to these personal advantages he was a natural sportsman and natural artist."

While at Mill Grove, Audubon met his wife, Lucy Bakewell. He would begin a career as a merchant, floating down the Ohio River to Louisville and Henderson, Kentucky, and eventual bankruptcy. It was in Louisville that Audubon met Alexander Wilson, who was selling subscriptions (the method of the day to finance costly reproductions) to his own book, *American Ornithology*, but Audubon's work was already vastly superior to Wilson's.

Like any artist, Audubon's style matured. One of the earliest innovations was the creation of his "board," allowing him to pose the birds he killed — alas, it wasn't as though he could hire them as models; besides, some made excellent eating — in the positions he observed in life. By May of 1812, he was drawing birds in flight. "Unlike birds posed on branches or standing on the ground, birds in flight required foreshortening to create the illusion of depth

across the span of their wings or down the length of their bodies," writes Rhodes. "Since Audubon's limited formal art training had not progressed to foreshortening, he had to learn that complicated technique on his own by trial and error."

Another breakthrough came when he added color chalk. "I resorted to a piece that matched the tint intended for the part, applied the pigment, rubbed the place with a cork stump and at once produced the desired effect!" he wrote. Then, in 1821 and '22, he revamped his style again. "He already knew the traditional French medium of pastel very well; he had been perfecting it since he was a young man. Now he added to his repertoire a crystal-clear watercolor technique, the ability to use gouache effectively, and an extraordinary varied use of the pencil, together with the talent for combining all of these graphic means to render a single bird," writes art critic Theodore E. Stebbins, Jr. "No one in America equaled him for graphic inventiveness until Winslow Homer some sixty years later; as for European parallels, one can only think of the great English watercolorists, both contemporaries of Audubon: J.M.W. Turner and Samuel Palmer." The original watercolors for *The Birds of America* are in the collection of the New-York Historical Society and rarely seen because of their sensitivity to light.

Having run financially aground in the Panic of 1819, Audubon journeyed to New Orleans to collect a debt from Samuel Bowen that involved the ownership of a steamboat. Things didn't go well. Bowen had already given the boat over to settle debts of his own. One thing led to another and Bowen attacked Audubon. As it turned out, he brought a cudgel to a knife fight, and Audubon stabbed him with his dagger. Later, appearing in front of Judge Henry P. Broadnax, Audubon defended himself before the court and was acquitted by reason of self-defense. "Mr. Audubon," the judge added, "you committed a serious offense — an exceedingly serious offense, sir — in failing to kill the damned rascal."

Having lost everything in Henderson, Audubon turned to portrait painting to make a living. Then, envisioning himself as "a one-man ornithological expeditionary force," as Rhodes put it, he went back down the Mississippi, returning to New Orleans in 1821 with his assistant, Joseph Mason (one of several assistants who painted the backgrounds in Audubon's works). His commercial portraits included the nude of a woman, Mrs. André, a mysterious client requiring his absolute discretion and to whom he referred as "The Fair Incognito" in his diaries. Eventually, he was joined in New Orleans by his wife, Lucy, living at what is now 505 Dauphine Street. Audubon was producing his ornithological paintings at a dizzying pace. After New Orleans it was up to Natchez, Mississippi, then Louisville and Philadelphia and Pittsburgh and on and on. His sources of income weren't confined to portraits. He taught dancing, drawing, even fencing.

Knowing that obtaining engravings of the number and quality necessary to produce *The Birds of America* could only be done in

Europe, Audubon sailed from New Orleans on the Delos on May 18th, 1826. The ship was carrying 924 bales of cotton and a seasick John James Audubon with more than 300 drawings in tin-lined wooden portfolios.

An American backwoodsman with crates full of art proved a topic of considerable novelty in an Old World keen for knowledge of the new one. Audubon was well received. The first engraver to take on his project was William Lizars in Edinburgh. Lizars did approximately 10 engravings before a strike by his colorists forced Audubon to turn to Robert Havell Sr. and his son in London.

"Robert Havell Jr. was a more painstaking engraver than William Lizars and his father supervised the London colorers perhaps more carefully but there was a qualitative difference between the technologies Lizars and the Havells used to make Audubon's colored plates," writes Rhodes. "The Havells used a process known as aquatint, which allowed them to print shadows and shadings in a range from light gray to black, leaving the colorists only the more limited task of applying a uniform wash of color over the aquatinted area: the shading made the color appear darker." Havell retouched the early Lizars plates, something that's noted in the lower right-hand corner of the wild turkey engraving currently on view. While even the Havells had their ups and downs satisfying Audubon's very specific instructions and expectations, it proved a match made in artistic heaven.

The last plate of *The Birds of America* was completed in June of 1838. Audubon was 53. His estimate of the project's cost, monies he raised himself, was "$115,640 — in today's dollars, about $2,141,000," reckons Rhodes. He began work on the octavo edition (a smaller and, hence, more profitable version) two years later. Audubon would suffer a stroke in 1848, and begin slipping into dementia. "His vivid personality faded into vacancy," says Rhodes. He passed away in January of 1851.

"What's beautiful about Audubon is that these birds are so dynamic and alive, it feels like they're almost jumping out of the page," says Silvia Fantoni, the director of Audience Engagement and Public Programs who put together the immersive exhibit comprised of 19 of Audubon's birds in varied habitats over a 24 hour period. "That's what we wanted to do. I find his work fascinating, how driven he was by this project. It's always interesting to see when an artist has this kind of obsession and vision and dedicated his life to do that. That's why we still celebrate him almost 200 years later."

Jim Moriarty is senior editor for PineStraw *magazine.*

Cottage Chic

In the heart of historic Carolina Place, a gem from 1920 begins its second century with style

By William Irvine

Photography By Rick Ricozzi

Carolina Place is a lovely historic residential neighborhood, the first of the three so-called "streetcar suburbs" — along with Carolina Heights and Winoca Terrace — that were developed in Wilmington at the turn of the last century. In 1906, a 68-acre parcel of land at 17th and Market streets was purchased by the American Suburban Corporation of Norfolk, Virginia, which envisioned an attractive but architecturally modest neighborhood for the middle class, with curving streets, wide sidewalks, hundreds of shade trees, and easy access to downtown via trolley line.

Aside from some new paint colors over the last hundred years, little has changed in Carolina Place, which seems frozen in time at around 1910. And this is the sense one gets upon approaching Laura Kokesh's 1911 Craftsman-style bungalow, a serene oasis mid-block on Perry Avenue, which you can see for yourself as part of this year's Historic Wilmington Foundation Azalea Festival Home Tour.

Like many new arrivals (she moved to Wilmington two years ago from Illinois), Kokesh was drawn to the warm coastal climate, but she also had some fairly specific requirements: "I wanted an old house, first of all — that was at the top of my list. I was interested in a small, historic city with a downtown area where you could walk

around, with restaurants and shops. I looked in Georgia, where my sister lives, but no success."

Wilmington kept coming up in her Google searches; she had never heard of it, but was intrigued. Soon the handsome architecture beckoned. She flew down for a long weekend, looked at five houses and then: Sold. In the course of three days, she 1) bought a new house; 2) quit her job; and 3) decided to move to North Carolina within the month. "A lot of life changes at once, but I don't regret it for a minute," she says with a smile.

The floor plan of the 900-square-foot, one-story cottage is deceptively modest; the unadorned floors and windows emphasize the ceiling height and make it feel like a much larger house. Luckily for Kokesh, the house was remodeled right before she moved in. "You should have seen the before pictures," she says. "It was nasty. Pink."

Looking around the house, you can see how this would be anathema to Kokesh, who has furnished the cottage with all neutrals, an effect that is very calming. "Well, you nailed it when you said calm," she says. "The natural palette I have chosen truly gives me a sense of peaceful calm . . . and even on a dreary day the house feels bright and cheery." The walls are French grays, with bathrooms in charcoal black. "I love using plants as my 'pop' of color," she says. "Their beauty and simplicity seem to

2010

naturally complement the neutral background in the house."

Upon opening the front door, you enter right into the living room with a large fireplace. But most noticeable are the details: no carpet. Classical cast-iron urns painted white, a freestanding wooden column topped by a large finial, tin ceiling panels hung on the wall as artwork. "I would describe my decorating style as vintage with an emphasis on chippy, repurposed and architectural pieces," says Kokesh. "I love collecting old books, mirrors and unique garden pieces." So it is no surprise to learn that Kokesh volunteers at Legacy Architectural Salvage (a project of Historic Wilmington Foundation), where she clearly gets first dibs on some of the new merchandise: "I initially came upon the shop where I first moved to Wilmington because I was looking for pieces for my own house. So it naturally seemed fitting to become a volunteer at a place that felt like my own home in many ways."

Moving through the parlor doors, a visitor enters the former dining room, but is now a second seating area. No dining room? "I don't really need one — no use for it," she says. Instead, the carpet-free room reveals pretty hardwood floors. A French sofa upholstered in white linen overlooks a rustic painted chest of drawers topped by a pair of large metal carriage lanterns; a painted urn rests atop an Ionic capital on a makeshift coffee table.

The right side of the cottage is an enfilade of master bedroom, bathroom, a guest room with a handsome cast-iron daybed, and a former outdoor porch, which has been converted to a guest bath with shower. The serene kitchen, at

the back of the house, has as its centerpiece a large built-in glass-door pantry for china and glassware, and ample under-counter storage and work surfaces. The back door leads out to a small yard, where Kokesh has laid a brick path and removed a large dead tree. "It is still a work in progress, but it brings me great joy to spend time out there now," she says.

But most memorable of all in this tiny house are the captivating tableaus of antiques that occupy every corner — here, an old painted metal lozenge, there an elegant urn-shaped 1930s lamp, pillar candles on old wooden balusters. It's all a result of Kokesh's refined eye. "My family likes to joke that I am an 'old soul.' "she says. "I really think there is a story to be told in each and every piece I own, and I love the connection antiques have with the past."

William Irvine is the senior editor of Salt.

The Historic Wilmington Foundation Azalea Festival Home Tour features 10 houses in three historic neighborhoods. April 4-6. For more information and tickets: historicwilmington.org/azalea-festival-home-tour.

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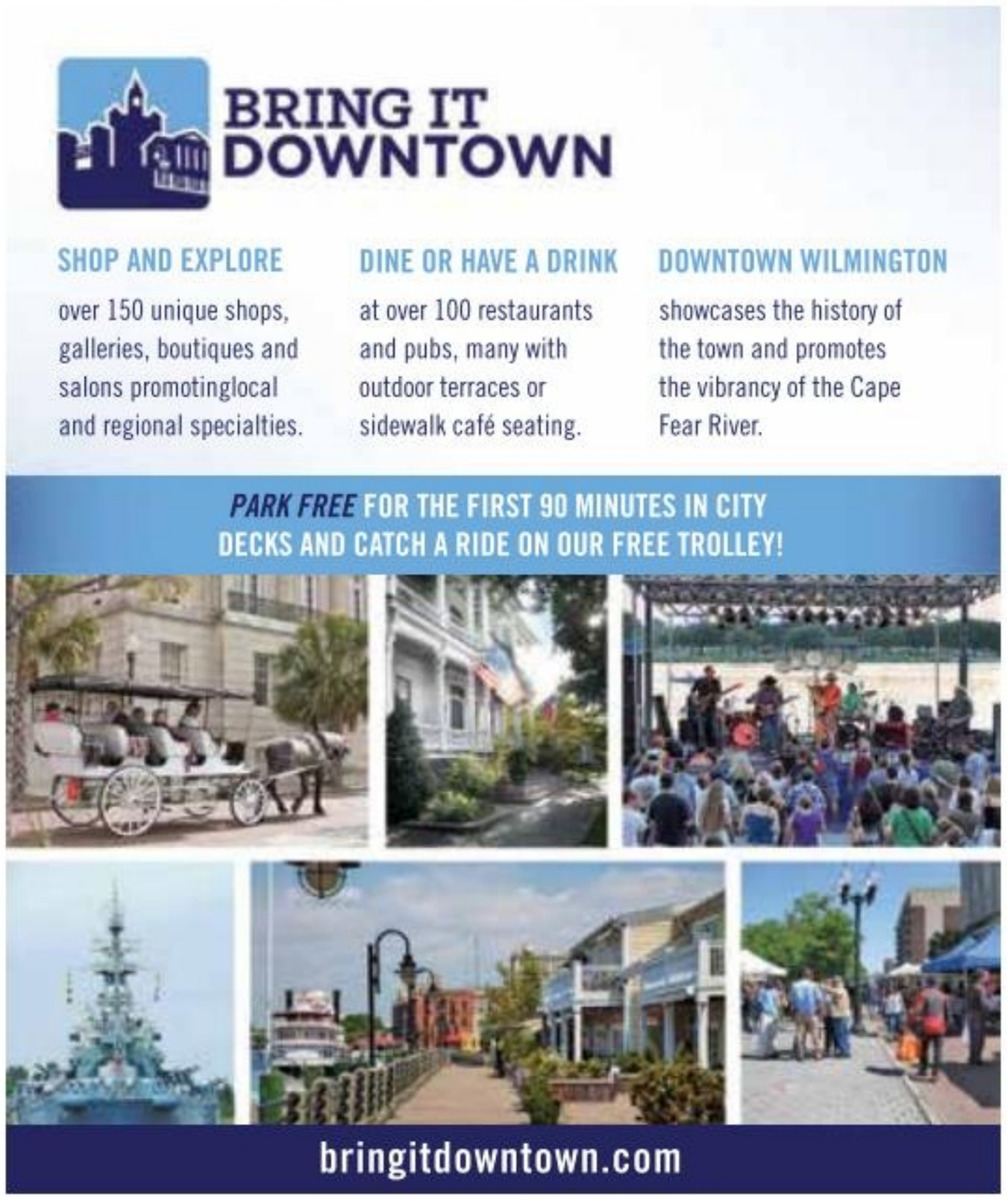
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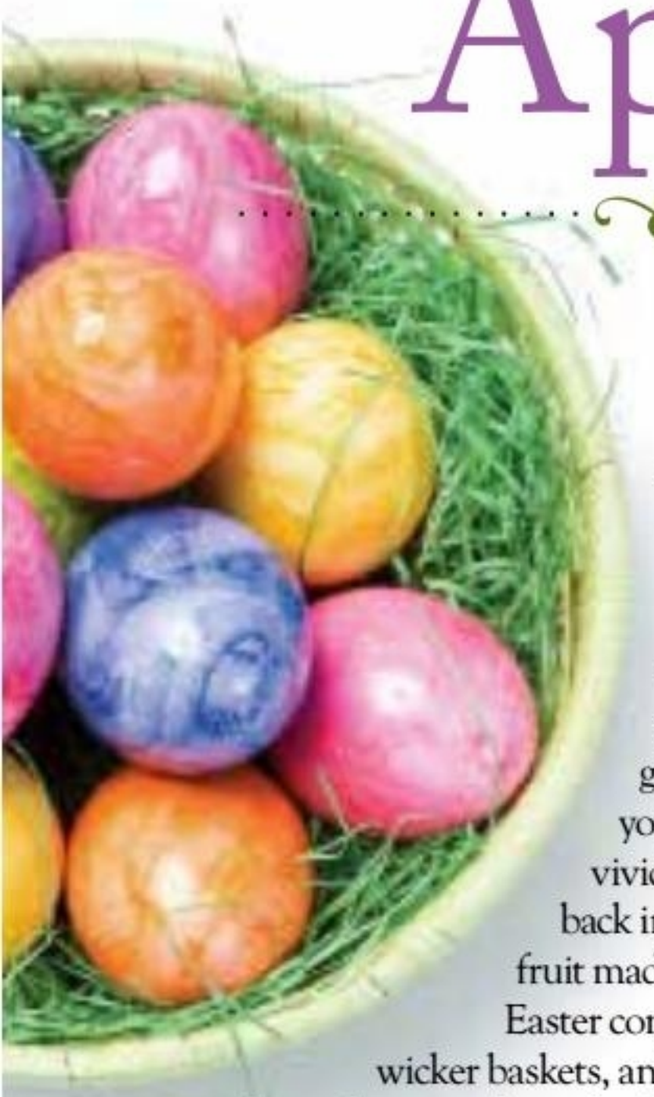


By Ash Alder

April is a procession of wonder. Flowering redbud. Rising asparagus. Row after row of tulips and daffodils.

When the earliest strawberries arrive, childhood memories of roadside stands and pick-your-own patches follow. The first time your grandma took you strawberry picking, you'd never seen berries so plump or vivid. Two, three, four buckets later, you're back in the car, eyes twinkling, belly full of fruit made sweeter because you picked it.

Easter conjures memories of Sunday hats and wicker baskets, and a grade-school field trip to a house down the street from the church. There, a classmate's yard is dotted with dozens of colorful eggs — some painted, some plastic, all filled with candy — but all hearts are set on the coveted silver one, a super-sized treasure found in the low branches of a climbing tree when the sun hits the foil just right.

Maybe next year.

Or perhaps the true magic is discovering what you aren't trying to find, like the robin's nest in one of the hanging baskets.

In my early 20s (read, coin laundry days), on a visit home for Easter, my folks planted a basketful of plastic eggs in the backyard, each one filled with quarters.

Sometimes the great surprise is the wonder that grows with age.

Devilish Alternative

My younger brother has single-handedly cleared a tray of deviled eggs at more than one Easter supper. That's why I was particularly stunned when he told me that he was adapting a vegan diet. *No more deviled eggs?* Well, not exactly. But when he told me about *Thug Kitchen*, a vegan cookbook peppered with language that would make our granny's draw drop, I understood. Inside: a recipe for deviled chick-pea bites. Although we can't print that here without heavy-handed edits, check out this equally scrumptious vegan recipe from Whole Foods Market: tender roasted baby potatoes topped with spicy yolk-free filling. Brother approved.

Deviled Potatoes

Ingredients:

12 baby potatoes (about 1 1/4 pounds)
2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
1/2 cup vegan mayonnaise
1/3 cup drained silken tofu
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon sweet paprika
1 teaspoon turmeric
1/2 teaspoon coarse sea salt
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

Method:

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Cut each potato in half crosswise. In a large bowl, toss potatoes with oil and place cut-side down on the prepared baking sheet. Roast until tender when pierced with a knife, about 30 minutes. Let cool.

Using a melon baller, scoop out center of each potato half. Combine potato flesh, mayonnaise, tofu, mustard, paprika, turmeric, salt and pepper in a food processor and pulse just until smooth. Scoop filling into potato halves. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes (and up to 2 days) before serving.

(Want to take this deviled egg alternative to the next level? Sprinkle with finely chopped fresh parsley before serving.)

Scope It Out

According to *National Geographic*, one of the top sky-watching events of the year will occur on Tuesday, April 23. On this dreamy spring morning, at dawn, watch as the waning gibbous moon approaches brilliant Jupiter as if they were forbidden lovers. Use binoculars if you've got them.

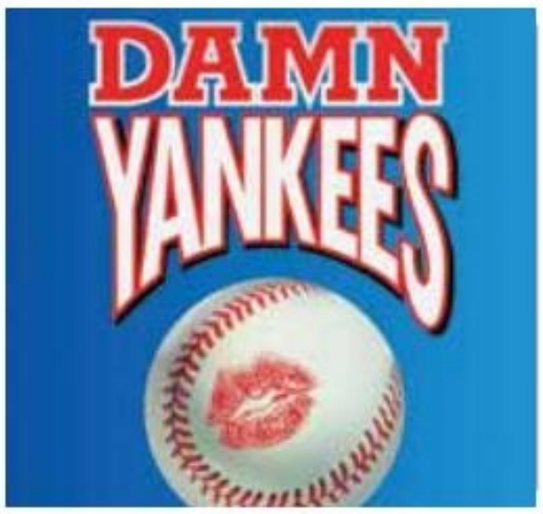
The Last Frost

The *Old Farmer's Almanac* speculates that a full moon in April brings frost. Cue the Full Pink Moon on Good Friday, April 19. While it's not actually pink, Algonquin tribes likely named this month's full moon for the wild ground phlox that blooms with the arrival of spring.

Consider it a signal that it's time to plan your summer garden.

Plant now, and enjoy fresh tomatoes and cukes right off the vine.

Arts Calendar



Damn Yankees Musical

4/5-7

Wilmington Geek Expo

4/20

STOMP

4/30-5/1

To add a calendar event, please contact calendar@saltmagazinenc.com. Events must be submitted by the first of the month, one month prior to the event.

4/1-7 37th Annual Juried Spring Art Show and Sale

Saturday - Wednesday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Thurs. - Sat., 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. The Wilmington Art Association's annual fair features a variety of works—paintings, watercolors, photography and sculpture. Admission: Free. Community Arts Center, 120 S. Second Street, Wilmington. Info: wilmingtonart.org.

4/3-7 72nd Annual North Carolina Azalea Festival

Founded in 1948, the Azalea Festival is one of the must-see annual events in the Port City. In addition to pageantry, there are parades, live entertainment, and plenty of excursions for the whole family, many of which are free. See website for complete list of locations and events. For info: (910) 794-4650 or ncazaleafestival.org.

4/4-7 Six Characters in Search of an Author

8 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. The UNCW Department of Theatre's performance of Luigi Pirandello's absurdist play. Admission: $6-$15. Cultural Arts Building, UNCW, 5270 Randall Drive, Wilmington. For info: (910) 962-3500

4/4-7 The Revolutionists

8 p.m. Big Dawg Productions presents Lauren Gunderson's *The Revolutionists*, a play that follows four women during the terrors of the French Revolution. Tickets: $18-$25. Cape Fear Playhouse, 613 Castle Street, Wilmington. For info: (910) 367-5237 or bigdawgproductions.org.

4/5-7 Damn Yankees

7:30 p.m; Sunday, 3 p.m. The classic Broadway musical about baseball player Joe Boyd, who sells his soul to the devil in order to beat the Yankees. Admission: $32. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. For tickets: (910) 632-2285.

4/4-7 Cape Fear Garden Club Azalea Garden Tour

The 66th Annual Azalea Garden Tour will feature 11 beautiful gardens all over town, beginning with a ribbon-cutting with a performance by the members of the Wilmington Symphony. Tickets: $35. For info and tickets: capefeargardenclub.org.

4/4-6 Historic Wilmington Foundation's Azalea Festival Home Tour

Saturday, 12:30-6 p.m.; Sunday, 1-5 p.m. This year's Azalea Festival Home Tour will feature 10 houses in three historic Wilmington neighborhoods: Downtown, Carolina Place and Carolina Heights. Tickets are valid for both days. Admission: $35-$40. Various locations. For info: (910) 762-2511 or historicwilmington.org/azalea-festival-home-tour.

4/7 Cape Fear Chorale Concert

4 p.m. The Cape Fear Chorale celebrates its 20th anniversary with a program titled "Sparkling Choral Gems," a variety of Broadway, classical and spiritual music. Admission: Free. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. Info: (520) 255-2828 or capefearchorale.org.

4/11 North Carolina Symphony Concert

7:30 p.m. The evening program features Debussy's La Mer, as well as works by Sibelius, Chausson, Boulanger and Britten. Admission: $16-$75. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third Street, Wilmington. For info: (910) 362-7999 or ncsymphony.org.

4/11-14 Master Gardener Association Plant Sale

Thursday-Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. This annual sale features more than 10,000 locally grown annuals, perennials, herbs, vegetables and shrubs. Master gardeners will be on hand to offer planting advice. Admission: Free. New Hanover Country Arboretum, 6206 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-7660 or nhcarboretum.org.

4/13-14 23rd Annual Pleasure Island Seafood, Blues, and Jazz Festival

10 a.m. to 11 p.m. Two outdoor stages with nonstop performances, including Danielle Nicole and Ana Popovic. Fort Fisher Air Force Recreation Area, 118 Riverfront Road, Kure Beach. For info: (910) 458-8434 or pleasureislandnc.org/events.

4/13 Neighborhood Yard Sale

7 a.m. - 1 p.m. Proceeds from this fundraiser go to garden beautification efforts at the Bellamy. Admission: Free; $15 to reserve a space. Bellamy Mansion, 503 Market Street, Wilmington. For info or to reserve a table: (910) 251-3700, extension 304 or block@bellamymansion.org.

4/13 The Book of Liz

7 p.m. David and Amy Sedaris' comedy involves Sister Liz, a member of the Squeamish order, who makes cheese balls from a secret recipe. Mayhem ensues. Tickets: $20-$47. TheatreNOW, 19 S. 10th Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-3669 or theatrewilmington.com.

4/14 Chamber Music Wilmington Concert

7:30 p.m. Tonight's performance features the Vera Quartet, award-winning young musicians from Spain and Cuba, who will perform works of Turina, de Falla and Ginastera. Admission: $30. Beckwith Recital Hall, UNCW, 5270 Randall Drive, Wilmington. For info: (910) 962-3500 or chambermusicwilmington.org.

4/14 Alice in Wonderland

2 p.m. and 6 p.m. Italian ballet stars and choreographers Ines Albertini and Walter Angelini will perform in the Wilmington Ballet's production of *Alice in Wonderland*. Admission: $15-$25. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third Street, Wilmington. For info: (910) 362-7999 or tickets@capefearstage.com.

4/15 An Evening with David Sedaris

7:30 p.m. Humorist and best-selling author David Sedaris comes to Wilmington for a one-night performance. Admission: $30-$90. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. For info: (910) 962-3500 or uncw.edu/arts.

4/18 Spring Eggventure

9 a.m - 12 p.m. Halyburton Park's annual Spring Eggventure takes place this morning, with a series of egg hunts for different age groups, programs on animal eggs and nests, and a spring nature hike. Admission: $5. Pre-registration required due to space limitations. Halyburton Park, 2099 South 17th Street, Wilmington. For info: (910) 341-0075 or info@halyburtonpark.com.

4/20 Wilmington Geek Expo

10 a.m - 6 p.m. A gathering for fans of all things geek. Among the featured programs: comic books and creators, gaming, anime, cosplay contest and panel discussions. Admission: $10-$40. Children under 11: Free. Wilmington Convention Center, 515 Nutt Street, Wilmington. For info: (910) 251-5101 or wilmingtongeekexpo.com.

4/25 An Evening with Rick Springfield

7:30 p.m. The Wilson Center presents An Evening with Rick Springfield, pop singer, songwriter, musician and actor. Tickets: $36-$95. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third Street, Wilmington. For info: (910) 362-7999 or rickspringfield.com.

4/25 Fred Hersch Ensemble: Leaves of Grass

7:30 p.m. The poetry of Walt Whitman is set to jazz by this legendary 12-member ensemble. Admission: $25-$75. Kenan Auditorium, UNCW, 515 Wagoner Drive, Wilmington. For info: (910) 962-3500 or uncw.edu/arts.

4/25 Day in the Country

8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Come to Genteel Plantation in Atkinson for a Day in the Country, a fundraising event for the Harrelson Center. Activities include

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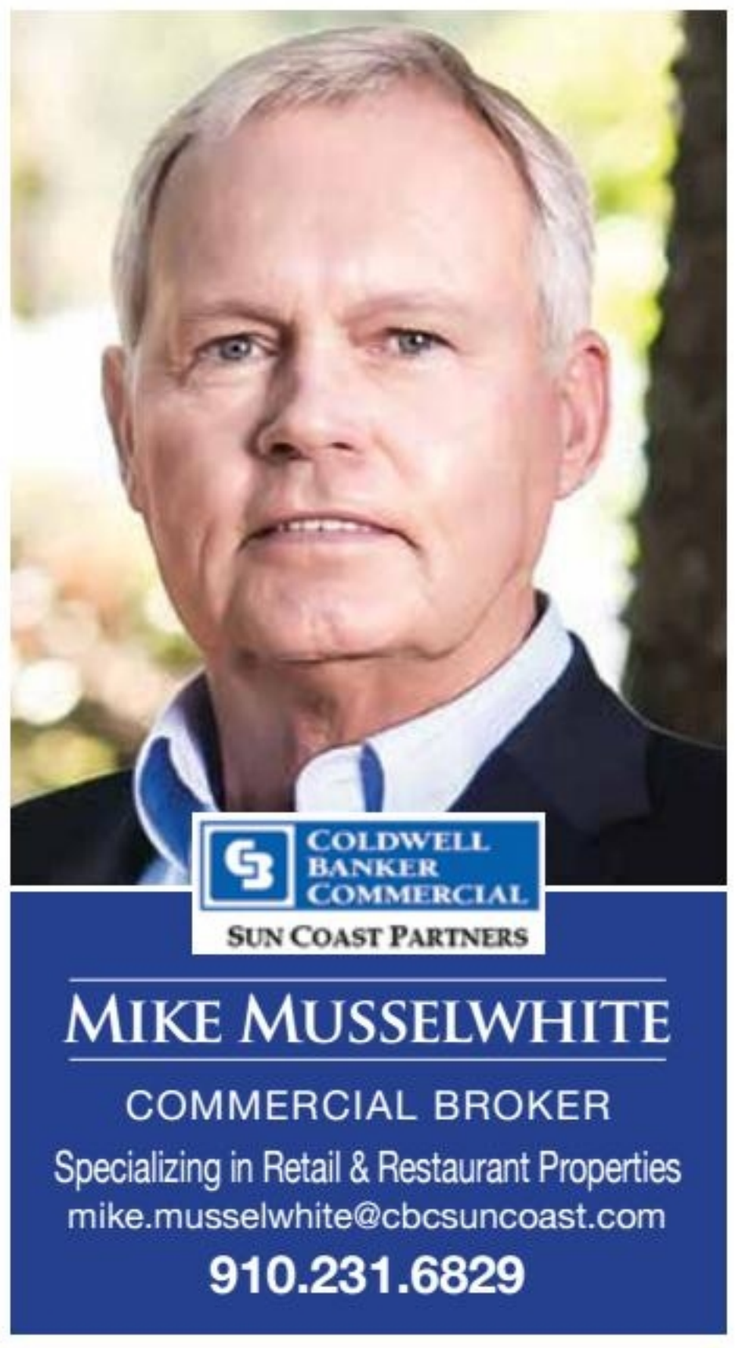

archery, fishing, hunting dog demonstrations, skeet shooting and a country buffet. Admission: $100. Genteel Plantation, 160 Genteel Lane, Atkinson. for info: (910) 343-8212 or harrelsoncenter.org.

4/25-28 The Carolina Cup

This annual standup paddle boarding (SUP) competition takes place all weekend, with clinics and demonstrations as well as races of various lengths over five courses. Blockade Runner Beach Resort, 275 Waynick Blvd., Wrightsville Beach. Registration and info: wrightsvillebeachpaddleclub.com/carolina-cup.

4/26-27 Chicago

The celebrated Broadway hit *Chicago* with score by John Kander and Fred Ebb comes to the Wilson Center this weekend. Tickets: $42-$95. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third Street, Wilmington. For info: (910) 362-7999 or tickets@capefearstage.com.

4/27 Making Legends Local Gala

6:30 p.m. The Carousel Center's 16th annual gala will take place this evening at Cape Fear Community College's Union Station. Tickets: $100. Cape Fear Community College, 502 N. Front Street, Wilmington. For info and tickets: carouselcenter.org.

4/28-5/8 Wilmington Jewish Film Festival

The sixth annual Wilmington Film Festival comes downtown with a variety of screenings. This weekend: *The Last Suit*, 4/28 at 3 p.m.; Hill Street, 4/29 at 7 p.m. Thalian Hall, 310 Chestnut Street, Wilmington. For tickets and more info: wilmingtonjff.org.

4/30 - 5/1 STOMP

7:30 p.m. The eight-member kings of percussion — they find their rhythm on everything from wooden poles to garbage cans to broomsticks — come for two nights to the Wilson Center. Admission: $28-$80. Wilson Center, 703 N. Third Street, Wilmington. Fir info: (910) 362-7999 or tickets@capefearstage.com.

WEEKLY HAPPENINGS

Monday

Wrightsville Farmers Market

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside beach market offering a variety of fresh, locally grown produce, baked goods, plants and unique arts and crafts. Seawater Lane, Wrightsville Beach. Info: (910) 256-7925 or www.townofwrightsvillebeach.com.

Tuesday

Wine Tasting

6 p.m. – 8 p.m. Free wine tasting hosted by a wine professional plus small plate specials all night. Admission: Free. The Fortunate Glass, 29 South Front Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 399-4292 or www.fotunateglass.com.

Cape Fear Blues Jam

8 p.m. A night of live music performed by the area's best blues musicians. Bring your instrument and join in the fun. Admission: Free. The Rusty Nail, 1310 South Fifth Avenue, Wilmington. Info: (910) 251-1888 or www.capefearblues.org.

Wednesday

Free Wine Tasting at Sweet n Savory Cafe

5 p.m. – 8 p.m. Sample delicious wines for free. Pair them with a meal, dessert or appetizer and learn more about the wines of the world. Live music starts at 7. Admission: Free. Sweet n Savory Cafe, 1611 Pavilion Place, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-0115 or www.swetnsavorycafe.com.

Weekly Exhibition Tours

1:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. A weekly tour of the iconic Cameron Arts Museum, featuring presentations about the various exhibits and the selection and installation process. Cameron Arts Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartsmuseum.org.

Ogden Farmers Market

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Local farmers, producers and artisans sell fresh fruits, veggies, plants, eggs, cheese, meat, honey, baked goods, wine, bath products and more.

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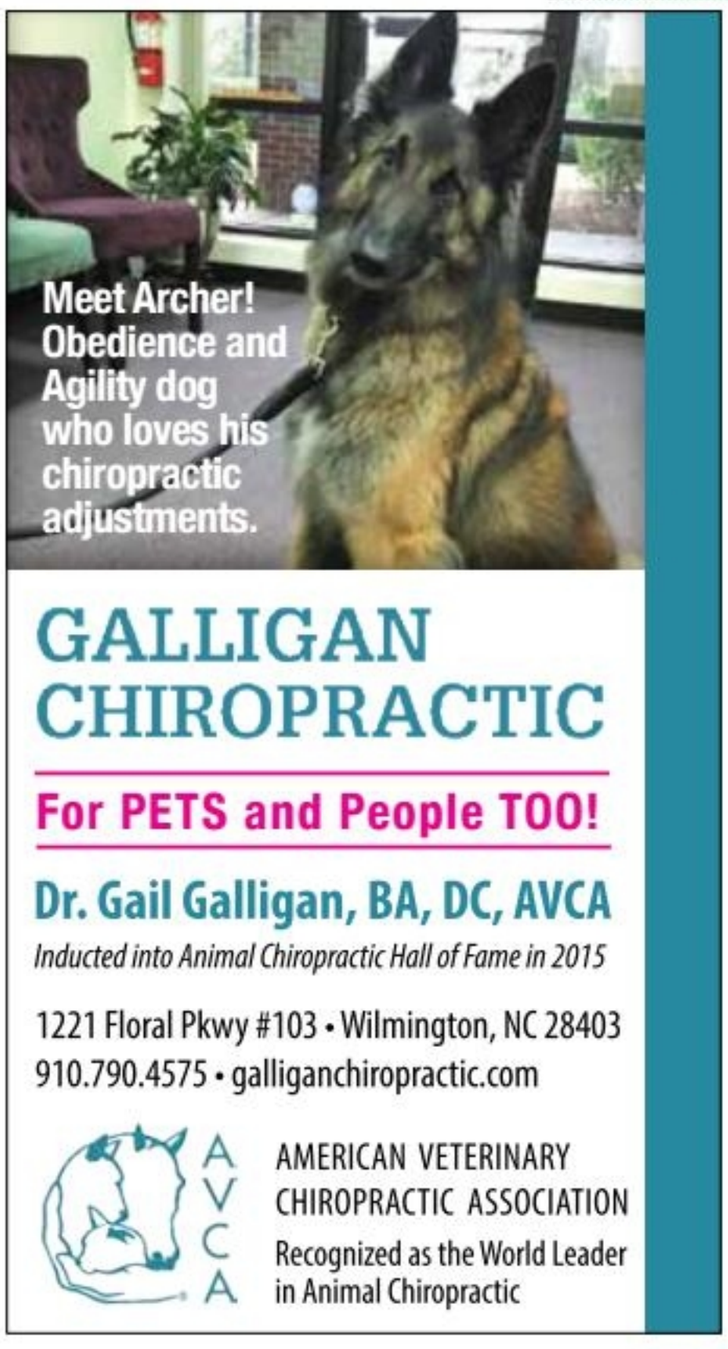
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Ogden Park, 615 Ogden Park Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtonandbeaches.com/events-calendar/ogden-farmers-market.

Poplar Grove Farmers Market

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Open-air market held on the front lawn of historic Poplar Grove Plantation offering fresh produce, plants, herbs, baked goods and handmade artisan crafts. Poplar Grove Plantation, 10200 U.S. Highway 17 North, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.poplargrove.org/farmers-market.

Thursday

Wrightsville Beach Brewery Farmer's Market

2 p.m. – 6 p.m. Come support local farmers and artisans every Thursday afternoon in the beer garden at the Wrightsville Beach Brewery. Shop for eggs, veggies, meat, honey, and handmade crafts while enjoying one of the Brewery's tasty beers. Stay for live music afterwards. Admission: Free. Wrightsville Beach Brewery, 6201 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. Info: (910) 256-4938 or www.wbbeer.com.

Yoga at the CAM

12–1 p.m. Join in a soothing retreat sure to charge you up while you relax in a beautiful, comfortable setting. Sessions are ongoing and are open to both beginners and experienced participants. Admission: $5–8. Cameron Art Museum, 3201 South Seventeenth Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 395-5999 or www.cameronartmuseum.org.

Friday and Saturday

Cape Fear Museum Little Explorers

10 a.m. Meet your friends in Museum Park for fun, hands-on activities! Enjoy interactive circle time, conduct exciting experiments, and play games related to a weekly theme. Perfect for children ages 3 to 6 and their adult helpers. Admission: Free. Cape Fear Museum, 814 Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 798-4370 or www.capefearmuseum.com.

Blackwater Adventure Tours

Join in an educational guided boat tour from downtown Wilmington to River Bluffs, exploring the mysterious beauty of the Northeast Cape Fear River. See website for schedule. River Bluffs, 1100 Chair Road, Castle Hayne.
Info: (910) 623-5015 or www.riverbluffsliving.com.

Saturday

Carolina Beach Farmers Market

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Outdoor "island-style" market featuring live music and local growers, producers and artisans selling fresh local produce, wines meats, baked goods, herbal products and handmade crafts. Carolina Beach Lake Park, Highway 421 and Atlanta Avenue, Carolina Beach. Info: (910) 458-2977 or www.carolinabeachfarmersmarket.com.

Wilmington Farmers Market at Tidal Creek

8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Weekly gathering of vetted vendors with fresh produce straight from the farm. Sign up for the weekly newsletter for advanced news of the coming weekend's harvest. 5329 Oleander Drive, Wilmington. For info: thewilmingtonfarmersmarket.com.

Riverfront Farmers Market

8 a.m. – 1 p.m. Curbside market featuring local farmers, producers, artisans, crafters and live music along the banks of the Cape Fear River. Riverfront Park, North Water Street, Wilmington. Info: (910) 538-6223 or www.wilmingtondowntown.com/events/farmers-market.

Taste of Downtown Wilmington

2:15 p.m., 2:45 p.m., 3:15 p.m. A weekly gourmet food tour by Taste Carolina, featuring some of downtown Wilmington's best restaurants. Each time slot showcases different food. See website for details. Admission: $55–75. Riverwalk at Market Street, Wilmington. Info: (919) 237-2254 or www.tastecarolina.net/wilmington/.

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Photographs by Bill Ritenour

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Adam Linker, Shelly Craddock

Erin Jameson, Collin Loy

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Hill Street	April 29th at 7 PM
Numbered	May 1st at 7 PM
Heading Home:	
Tale of Team Israel	May 5th at 2 PM
Golda's Balcony	May 5th at 7 PM
Promise at Dawn	May 6th at 7 PM
93 Queen	May 8th at 7 PM

To purchase tickets or for more information, visit wilmingtonjff.org

The Wilmington Jewish Film Festival is sponsored in part by the United Jewish Appeal of Wilmington, the City of Wilmington, the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, and Arts Friendly.

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Port City People

Mardi Gras Casino Night

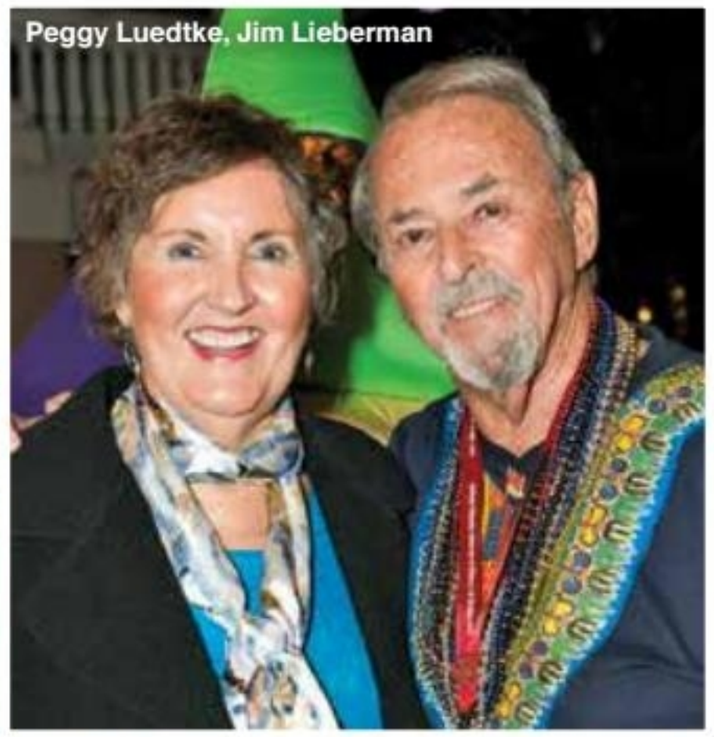
Bellamy Mansion

Saturday, March 2, 2019

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Robert Wilkinson, Mark Sorensen, Tom Salzman

Angelique Nichols, John Wirsen


Peggy Luedtke, Jim Lieberman

David Baron, Katie Scott

Stefanie Smith, Celia Rivenbark

Angelo Welsch, Stephanie Lanier, Peggy Penninger, Maripaul Cosper

Angie King, Pam Hicks, Kat Kammer

Annie Jacobs

Ashley Merklinger, Carolyn Gonzalez, Linda Gould

Kim & Sam Boyce

Colenn & Karen Rodenheiser

Lee & Ken Giaimo

Port City People

20th Annual St. Patrick's Day Parade

Downtown Wilmington

Saturday, March 16, 2019

Photographs by Bill Ritenour

Katy Cunningham, Sharon Dixon

Michael, Jan & Addy Last, Marguerite & Steve Hyman

Heather & Becca Hetzell

Savannah & Dylan Lamb

Wilmington Mayor, Bill Saffo

Courtney & Steve Last

Scarlett & Chad Christensen

Kimberly Hunt, Tom Dmytriw

Justin Stowers

Ada Scronce, Dora Daughhetee

Tony & Kelley Turner

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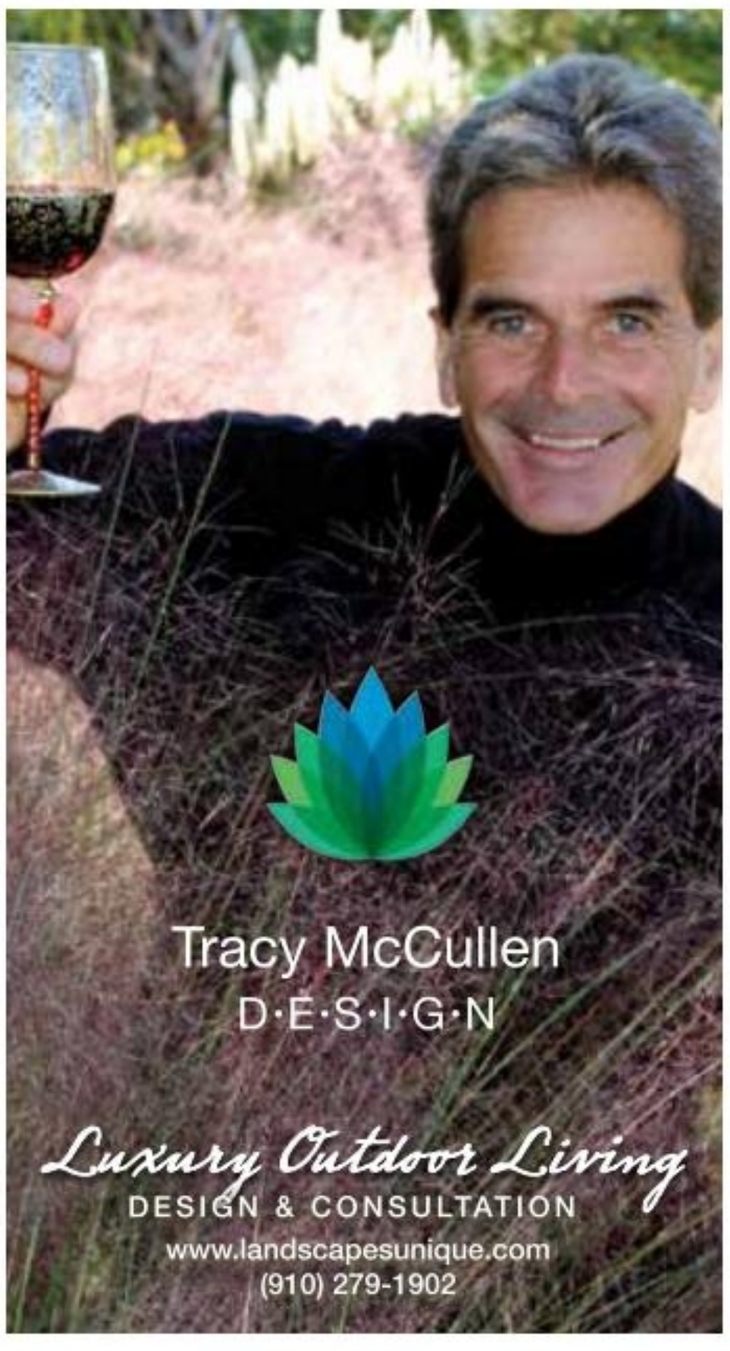

Tracy McCullen

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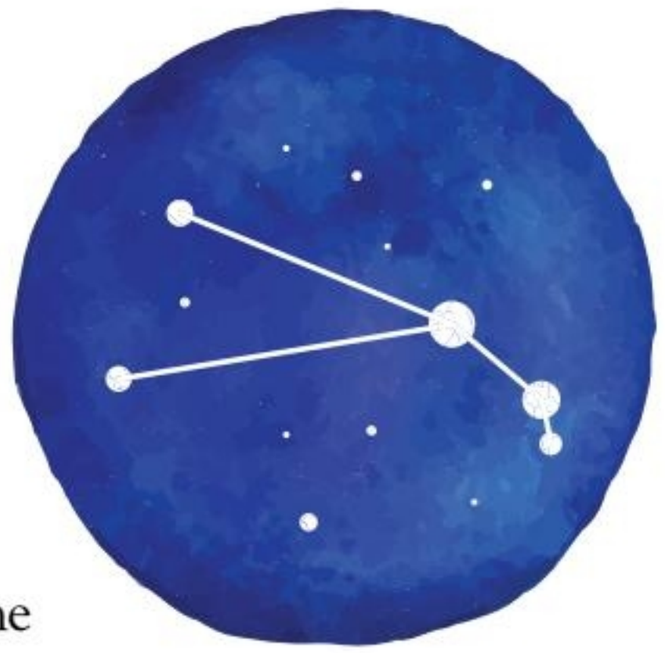
C'mon Baby, Light My Fire

For Aries, the astrological arsonists, this month brings magic and stardust

By Astrid Stellanova



April brings us showers, sunshine and duckies, Star Children. Some famous Aries creatives and legends like Maya Angelou, Booker T. Washington and Charlie Chaplin have transitioned to the great beyond. Others are still with us: Emma Watson, Alec Baldwin, Pharrell Williams, Francis Ford Coppola, Robin Wright.

Arians are like astrological arsonists, knowing how to make fire and stir it in others. Antagonists and protagonists. Blazing a trail, always leaving a fiery glow — even if you didn't make it to the 1979 clogging championships with the Smoking Hot Feet of Lizard Lick — you sure know how to make a memorable exit.

Aries (March 21–April 19)
The sages all say this is a big year for you, starting now. You feel like you've been in a drought and are parched for a drink of water. Sugarbritches, get ready to guzzle. As much as the beginning of the year was not exactly epic in your opinion, this month is made of stardust and magic. Plain old well water will taste like sweet tea and a Saltine, like a mouthful of happiness.

Taurus (April 20–May 20)
You came out swinging, like somebody stole your buggy at the Piggly Wiggly. The wheels were wonky anyway, and sometimes karma takes over. Forget the little stuff and try and concentrate on the fact that the daisies are popping up and good things are coming.

Gemini (May 21–June 20)
Kindness is demanding that you learn to share, bless your heart, if it's nothing more than the remote control with dead batteries, or a dried-up, day-old biscuit. You love your toys, but by your age, Darlin', it's time to share.

Cancer (June 21–July 22)
Measure twice and cut once. Shine your shoes. Don't leave the house wearing ripped pantyhose or old sweat pants. You are going to have to figure and refigure to get ahead of a wily competitor. But it can happen.

Leo (July 23–August 22)
It is touching how much small things count with you. Nobody knows that. They think you are difficult to impress, but you love a dive as much as a gourmet bistro. Reveal who you really are, and take a pal to Waffle House.

Virgo (August 23–September 22)
How come you can't make anyone who enters your door feel at home? Maybe because you really wish they were at their home instead. Expand your heart and open your arms to some very big happiness, Sugar.

Libra (September 23–October 22)
If you faked any more enthusiasm, you'd get sugar diabetes. It's a good thing to be enthused, but your charm is turned one degree too high. A smile is your best accessory, Darling, but so is keeping it real.

Scorpio (October 23–November 21)
No selfies. No cries for attention, Honey. I don't care how bored you get, the best thing for you right now is to focus on finishing something you started a long time ago and refuse to tie up. Finish. It.

Sagittarius (November 22–December 21)
You got caught talking with your mouth full of bull, Sugar. Sometimes, the best cure for lying is quiet contemplation. Stick to your knitting, bowling or fishing. Thank your friends for calling you out.

Capricorn (December 22–January 19)
It was mainly a symbolic dogfight, but there you were, right in the middle of it. They headed home looking like they got chewed up by the lawnmower. You walked away with a smile. Throw your shoulders back and show some humility in victory.

Aquarius (January 20–February 18)
You put all your business out there on the showroom floor. We see it. Everybody gets it. You are open for business, Sugar. There will surely be plenty who want what you are selling, but don't give it away for free.

Pisces (February 19–March 20)
Honey, there is raw ambition, and then, sometimes, it is just a teensy bit undercooked. The cornbread ain't quite done in the center. You are on the right track but your ideas need a little time and effort to succeed

For years, Astrid Stellanova owned and operated Curl Up and Dye Beauty Salon in the boondocks of North Carolina until arthritic fingers and her popular astrological readings provoked a new career path.

Getaway

Or, how to start your own Vacation Club

By Clyde Edgerton

When my wife, Kristina, was told we could get four days and three nights in a Marriott hotel luxury suite with two bedrooms, two baths, kitchen, three or four TVs in Myrtle Beach for $9 (OK: $134) if we'd sit together for a one-and-a-half-hour lecture about time-shares, I said: Goodness. Why not?

Excuse me — not time-share, but some other name, like: Marriott Vacation Worldwide Club Getaway. "Time-share" is out of fashion in some quarters . . . the name, not the concept. There's a guy who comes on cable radio and says, "I'm a lawyer, not very smart, but mean, and I'll get you out of your time-share contract by suing the hell out of the time-share company, and if that doesn't work, I'll burn down your time-share and we will split the insurance."

But with the Marriott Vacation Worldwide Club Getaway, rather than buying a two-weeks-a-year stay at one hotel suite, apartment, small closet or room (after which other people use it for the rest of the year, and get it dirty), you — in this new kind of setup — buy the possibility of staying in a luxury hotel about anywhere in the world when you go on vacation, and you use up a certain number of points each time that happens, depending on how big your abode is. You buy so many points a year for the rest of your life. If you don't like the deal, that's OK because you will die and leave it to your heirs, and they can do the same, like a home. Resale value? I don't know.

Let's jump ahead about one hour and 15 minutes into our lecture. I asked: "What's your return rate?"

"Excuse me?"

"How many couples out of 10 buy in?"

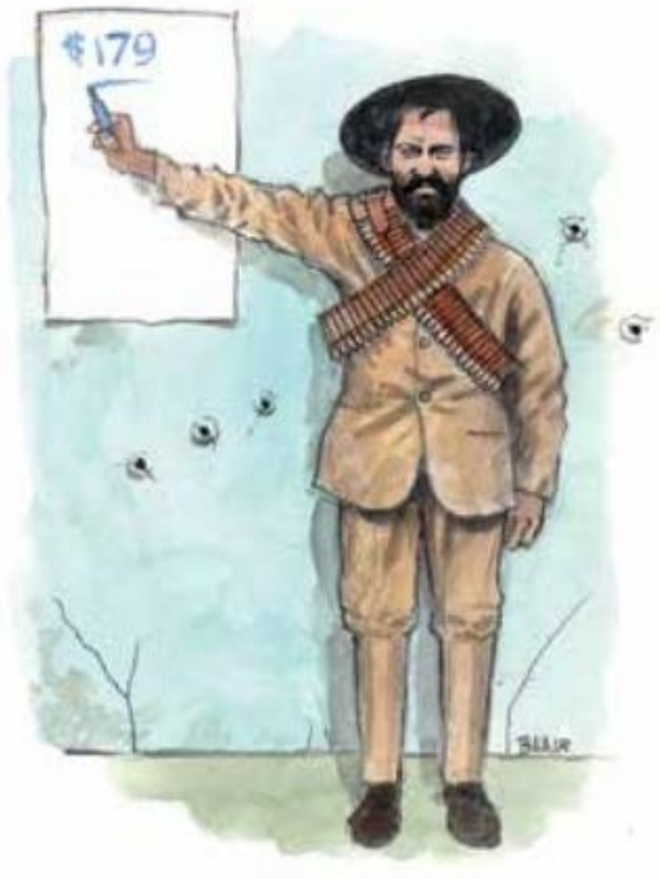
"Three."

"Wow, I'm surprised it's that high. That's pretty good."

Now mind you, Kristina and I had decided that there was no way we could buy in. I mean there was the very slightest chance, but we vowed we would not be swayed.

The luxury hotel was, well, luxurious. The January weather was nice, there were several football-field-size heated pools, a Jacuzzi. Our suite was two big bedrooms, two baths, kitchen, living room, all that. We just kind of relaxed. Our kids did what they do at home: They sat on a bed and looked into a cellphone. Well, that's not fair — they do other things. Perceptions are sometimes a product of fear.

We got there on a Friday, and on Saturday morning, while the kids sit on their beds looking into their cellphones, Kristina and I head for the lecture. On the way, we walk around, out onto the beach and back. I mean, who needs the beach when you are at a luxury hotel? There is this bevy of nice grills near the beach area (inside the gate to the beach), these big cabinets of dark wooden cubbyholes for your beach paraphernalia (inside the gate to the beach). There are beach chairs, ping-pong tables, a gym (inside the gate to the beach). Suddenly, I realized the thing you go to the beach for, the beach, was not central to a Marriott Worldwide Vacation Club Getaway. Why? A guess: Nobody makes money when you go for a walk on the beach. And the gate keeps out the undesirables who might be walking by on the beach.



Just before the lecture, we enter a large room with bar, snacks, drinks, many couches, big green plants and lamps. I'd thought other folks would be coming in. Nope. It ended up, at first, being just three of us.

A nice young man, very relaxed, open collar, sports jacket, sits down with us and says, "This is definitely going to be low key. No high-pressure stuff." We talk about where he's from, his brothers and sisters, where he went to school. I like him. Surely he thinks we're not interested, I think.

It is very low pressure . . . for about 40 minutes. After about 45 minutes we have taken a little stroll past beautiful, large 3-D photos of resort areas around the world, and we are now in a very small room. A guy who looks like Pancho Villa comes in. He wears two belts of ammo, crossed on his chest. He starts putting numbers on a white board with a blue felt-tipped pen — what our payments will be for a certain number of points a year. He's good. I will later admit to Kristina that I was almost swayed. Then I think to ask, "Is there a maintenance fee?" Well, there is. Two grand a year for the moderate package we're examining, and I think to myself: If we get away for only four nights in a certain year, that's $500 a night out the gate.

We say to Pancho: "We are not doing this, sir. The end." He changes tactics, halves all the numbers on the board, unclicks the safety-guard strap on his pistol.

We persist. Pancho gives up, and they run a woman in on us. No ammo belts. She says if we call her by 1 p.m. that day, we can get three nights and four days at any Marriott luxury hotel for $199 if we promise to come together for a 1-hour, 30-minute lecture. This is true. I realize that it's the three out of 10 that's driving the bus. I say, no thanks. She says $149. I say no. She gives us a business card and says, "Call me if you change your mind."

We return to our suite, relax, enjoy our stay for another day, talk about how lucky we are to be one of the seven in 10. We gather our kids and their cellphones off their beds, return to Wilmington a day early, and have a family meeting. We're going to start spending time at the beach, and in the yard, and walking, and going to state parks. We're going to start our own Vacation Nature Getaway Club.

Features? Yard, beach, state parks.

Cost: Nada.

Clyde Edgerton is the author of 10 novels, a memoir and most recently, Papadaddy's Book for New Fathers. *He is the Thomas S. Keenan III Distinguished Professor of Creative Writing at UNCW.*

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